PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

STO. NIÑO FESTIVAL Devotees bring their Sto. Niño images to the Mass officiated by Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal at the Basilica Minore Center in Cebu City as part of the Sinulog Festival. (See story on Page A17.)

Draft Senate report seeks Villar censure

Unethical conduct in C-5 extension project cited

By Christine O. Avendaño

A DRAFT REPORT BY THE Senate committee of the whole is seeking the censure of Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. after finding him to have engaged in improper and unethical conduct in connection with the C-5 road extension project.

The report, which an official of a political party furnished the Inquirer, said Villar's involvement in the C-5 project in Parañaque and Las Piñas cities "made the Filipino suffer the total amount of P6.22 billion."

The committee demanded the money's return.

The money came from the realigned P4.26 billion for the extension project, the P1.8 billion spent for the original project but which was wasted due to the realignment, and the P949.1 million in overpriced right-of-way payments for Villar's real estate.

DRAFT, A22

More party-list groups means a longer ballot

THE BALLOT TO BE USED IN THE country's first automated polls in May could end up being as long as two and a half feet and the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is hard pressed to make it shorter.

Comelec spokesperson James Jimenez said currently the ballot had a "maximum" length of 28 inches or a little over 2 feet, but it could stretch to 29 inches after the approval of 144 party-list groups to participate in the elections.

"It's the names of the party-list groups that would lengthen the ballot. We're finding a way to shorten it further. Maybe we could just use

PHOTO, A10

YOUNG SURVIVOR A US Red Cross worker helps a boy injured in the earthquake in Port-au-Prince. Tricking aid has caused rising tensions among desperate Haitians. REUTERS

Day 5: Aid stalls in Haiti chaos

PORT-AU-PRINCE, HAITI—RESCUERS pulled a dehydrated but otherwise uninjured woman from the ruins of a luxury hotel in the Haitian capital early Sunday, an event greeted with applause from onlookers witnessing rare good news in a city otherwise filled with corpses, rubble and desperation.

"It's a little miracle," the woman's husband, Reinhard Riedl, said after hearing his wife was alive in the wreckage. "She's one tough cookie. She is indestructible."

For many, though, the five days since the 7.0-magnitude quake hit have turned into an aching wait for the food, water and medical care slowly making its way from an overwhelmed airport rife with political squabbles.

And while aid is reaching the country, growing impatience among the suffering has spawned some violence.

Nobody knows how many died in Tuesday's quake. Haiti's government alone has already recovered 20,000 bodies—not counting those recovered by independent agencies or relatives

OSAKI, A23

A race against time to rescue 6 Filipinos

By Jocelyn R. Uy and Jeronee Arong

USING THEIR BARE HANDS, FILipino soldiers clawed through the rubble of a collapsed hotel in Haiti in a race against time, as voices coming from the ruins where four other Filipinos lay trapped grew fainter, the

RESCUERS, A23

Public shows mistrust of automated elections

By Amanda Doronila

ANALYSIS

PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE FIRST automated national election is ebbing less than four months before the May 10 polls.

Nervousness over the failure of transforming the manual voting procedures has mounted following the disclosure last week that the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is behind in its timetable in installing the new system by election day.

The media last week reverberated with warnings from the private sector of the dire consequences from the failure of the conversion of the system into one driven by computerized machines or from the malfunctioning of the new counting machines, either through tampering or mechanical defects.

The feared consequences include, first, public unrest fomented by high expectations that the replacement of the manual system would do away with widespread fraud and, second, such an unrest could give reasons to President Macapagal-Arroyo to declare a failure of elections, allowing her to hold on to office beyond the expiration of her term in June.

PUBLIC, A6

It's nothing but a piece of paper, says Cayetano

By Christine O. Avendaño

A SOURCE IN THE SENATE CONfirmed last night that the Inquirer's copy of the draft report on Sen. Manuel Villar's involvement in the controversial C-5 road extension project was authentic.

Reacting to the Inquirer report, Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano, a party mate of Villar's, declined to discuss the contents of the draft report, saying that Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile had instructed the senators not to discuss it with the media.

"Until the report is signed by the majority of the senators, it's nothing but a piece of paper," he said in a phone interview.

Cayetano was not the Inquirer source who confirmed the authenticity of the draft report.

Cayetano, a member of the Nacionalista Party whose standard-bearer for the May presidential election is Villar, asked why the report was leaked

IT'S NOTHING, A22

2 ex-justices say GMA can pick SC chief

By Norman Bordadora in Manila and Marlon Cinco Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE JUDICIAL AND BAR COUNCIL (JBC) tackles today the issue of whether to start drawing up a list of possible successors to Chief Justice Reynato Puno, a day after two retired jurists defended President Macapagal-Arroyo's right to make her choice despite a ban on "midnight appointments" before elections.

2 EX-JUSTICES, A22

Bombs harder to find when threat is rare

CHICAGO—SCREENERS SEARCHING for weapons like guns or bombs are more prone to error when the incidence of such threats is small, US researchers said on Thursday.

When people look for something rare

BOMBS, A23

WEATHER FORECAST

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4-Digit: 1 8 6 2 9 2

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Chiz backing Jojo but not Erap

Makati mayor and Escudero go a long way back – to the campaign of FPJ

By Christian V. Esguerra

SEN. FRANCIS "CHIZ" ESCUDERO HAS thrown his support behind Partido ng Mahirap Pilipino's vice presidential candidate, Makati Mayor Jejomar "Jojo" Binay, but is apparently not backing its standard-bearer, former President Joseph "Erap" Estrada.

In an interview with the Inquirer, Binay confirmed that Escudero, who finished second as vice presidential candidate of the Nacionalista Party–People's Coalition (NPC) last May 2004, was helping his campaign, but added that it was "not a package deal"—meaning, Escudero could accept an endorsement to support Estrada.

Escudero reportedly announced his first campaign meeting on Thursday, the day the Liberal Party (LP) was led by ex-Manila Mayor Lito Atienza endorsed Estrada's candidacy during a gathering in the Pen Area.

"Yes, he is supporting my candidacy and I am very happy for that because we can form a lot from him," Binay said in Filipino, referring to Escudero's experience during the presidential campaign for the late Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in 2004.

"But it's not a package deal," he added, explaining that Escudero was not necessarily supporting Estrada's bid as well.

Asked if reports were true that Escudero was backing Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III for president, Binay replied: "I don't know. It's precisely the reason why we have not decided on his ticket role in the campaign. He might be helping another presidential candidate and it might end up a lot of his time."

A source in Estrada's camp said Escudero had actually joined Binay as his campaign manager and, in fact, presided over the Thursday meeting.

The source, who asked not to be identified, said Escudero would be supporting the presidential bid of Liberal Party standard-bearer Aquino.

An aide of Escudero's told the Inquirer the senator could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Binay downplayed the political implications of Escudero's selective support, saying that Estrada would not mind. He is "real sister-oriented."

Binay said his arrangement with Escudero was "a personal agreement."

"I had been trying to enlist (Escudero's) support for some time. I can just imagine his role as in the campaign. He was a topnotcher (in the Senate) and he has a lot of experience. He has a huge following that he can tap," Binay said.

Escudero and Binay were part of Pwe's campaign team in 2004 as spokespersons and campaign managers respectively.

In Binay's camp, Escudero would be pitted against his former party mate and actor Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. Reps. Alfredo Vergara and Estrada were to a good presentation in the Senate's second day of the impeachment trial against Chief Justice Renato Corona, noting that the former president was third among presidential candidates in recent surveys.

Enrile said Binay's campaign against Estrada was the prospect of disqualification in the May elections. Commission on Elections said, later, the Supreme Court ruled that he was not disqualified to run again.

"Binay is the ruled of the masses," he told the Inquirer. "But once he is elected, we expect his rulings to cease."

Estrada won't quit race for anybody—Enrile

By Christine O. Avendaño

JOSEPH ESTRADA WILL NOT QUIT THE presidential race, according to his ally Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile, who claims that those spreading the rumor are simply after the followers of the former president.

"He will not withdraw from the race," Enrile repeatedly said when interviewed over radio station dzBB yesterday.

Estrada was just laughing off such talks, said Enrile, who is supporting the ousted leader.

Enrile is making rounds under Estrada's Partorosa ng Maunang Pilipino party.

The former president continues to rank third in polls on who people would likely vote for president in the May elections.

Enrile said there had been attempts by different camps to convince Estrada to support leading presidential contenders Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III and Sen. Manuel Villar Jr. to withdraw.

He said that before Christmas, Aquino and his sisters, including TV host Kris Aquino, went to see Estrada.

"They asked that he help Noynoy," said Enrile. Aquino is the standard-bearer of the Liberal Party.

Estrada supposedly told them he could not give in to their request because he was running for president himself, Enrile said.

Asked if he and his siblings had visited Estrada to ask for his help, Aquino said: "My sisters and I collectively, and in part, saw President Estrada a total of three times. First, when he visited my mom at the hospital. Second, at the wake and burial, at a small dinner where we thanked him for the kindnesses he extended to our mother. Seven Enrile was present in all three occasions and was obviously and really entertained."

Enrile said he got ruled of Estrada's meeting with the Aquino siblings from someone who was there.

He said that Villar said his wife, Las Piñas City Rep. Cynthia Villar, also visited Estrada at the San Juan City residence.

"She did hand him a Bible (Binay did not give it)," Enrile said.

He said the Villars visited Estrada's room before the political environment heated up." With a report from Gil Cabunoguin Jr.

Young Pinay headed for Davos forum

A 16-YEAR-OLD FILIPINO based in Tokyo, Japan, has been selected by the British Council to be one of six young leaders it will send to the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on Jan. 27-31.

Carmina Maroncora, a student at the International School Tokyo, was chosen under the Global Changemakers program of the British Council, the United Kingdom's international organization for cultural relations and educational opportunities.

She and the five other delegates from Iraq, Canada, Sri Lanka, Portugal and Botswana were selected from over 1,200 applicants.

"She impressed them with her convincing and articulate style of argument, as well as the scale of ideas she had for personal social activism projects," the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said in a statement.

The DFA said Maroncora is active in volunteer work through organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Aphasic Home, Second Harvest, Free the Children, Model United Nations, and her school's teen program.

The British Council website described Maroncora as a "social activist."

Maroncora, accompanied by British Council officials led by Steve Adams, paid a courtesy call on Philippine Ambassador Domingo Siazon in Tokyo on Friday. —Jerome Aning

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RP scores higher in WB ease of trade index

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINES ranked significantly higher in the World Bank's global ranking of trade logistics, indicating improvements in the country's trade-facilitation environment.

According to the 2010 WB logistics performance report entitled "Connecting to Compete: Trade Logistics in the Global Economy," the Philippines ranked 44th among 155 countries in terms of quality of trade logistics, with a score of 3.14.

In the previous report released in 2007, the Philippines ranked 65th out of 150 countries.

The Philippines was also cited among the top 10 trade logistics "most performers," grabbing 3rd place among countries in the lower middle-income category.

"Including high-income countries, the 30 most significant over-performers were Bangladesh, China, the Philippines, Democratic Republic of Congo, India, Madagascar, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda and Vietnam," the WB said in the report released over the weekend.

The WB assessed and ranked countries according to the following nine areas: Quality of trade and transport-related infrastructure, ease of arranging competitively priced shipments, competence and quality of logistics services, ability to track and trace consignments, and frequency with which shipments reach the consignee within the scheduled time.

Earlier, the Philippines' Bureau of Customs said it had implemented several measures to improve trade facilitation. One such measure was the use of X-ray machines for auditing of shipments and standard price benchmarks for determining tariff payments.

The BOC also said it had started computerizing the process for paying tariffs and fees, further hastening the process of releasing and importing goods.

The best performing country in terms of the logistics performance index was Germany, registering a score of 4.11.

Other countries that belonged in the top 10 were Singapore (4.09), Sweden (4.04), Netherlands (4.01), Luxembourg (3.96), Switzerland (3.95), Japan (3.93), United Kingdom (3.93), Belgium (3.92) and Norway (3.92).

On the other hand, the 10 worst performers that ranked 146th to 155th were Sudan (2.23), Nepal (2.22), Iraq (2.12), Comoros (2.10), Gabon (2.07), Somalia (2.04), Namibia (2.02), Sierra Leone (1.97), Eritrea (1.7) and Armadia (1.34).

Manila Water and Maynilad issue urgent appeal to NAPOCOR

Manila Water Company and Maynilad Water Services, the two private concessionaires providing water and wastewater services to the metropolis and its environs, are strongly urging the National Power Corporation (NAPOCOR) to stop drawing any more water for power generation from the Angat Dam.

The appeal is being made in the face of the continued decline in the water level of the Angat Dam that serves as the main source of water supply for 15 million residents of Metro Manila.

The El Niño phenomenon is causing less rainfall and water in flow into Angat River. Water levels at the Angat Dam is now at 208.15 meters above sea level (masl) on January 15, down by five meters below the lowest rule curve of 200.31 masl.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has reduced the raw water allocation for both concessionaires to 3,715 million liters per day (MLD) for January 2010, down by 6.5 percent from 4,000 Mld last December 2009. If the El Niño phenomenon will persist, the allocation will go down further to 3,024 Mld by May and June.

The two concessionaires are now urging the NAPOCOR to act on their request on available water at the Angat Dam will be prioritized solely for domestic water use as embodied in the National Water Code.

Corrections

IN THE JAN. 11 ISSUE, the Mayplang, the news column on Page B2.3 of the Business Monday section...."Who will speak for people?"...inadvertently omitted the name of the author. The author's name is Aurelio Angeles.

IN THE JAN. 15 ISSUE, a front-page story "PNB-B.S. Lobo's goes Global today"...misstated the designation of one of the doctors of St. Luke's Medical Center at Bonifacio Global City. Dr. Jossel Lim is the head of the thoracic/endocrine surgery—not [illegible] surgery...Department. The head of Surgery is Dr. Arturo de la Rosa.

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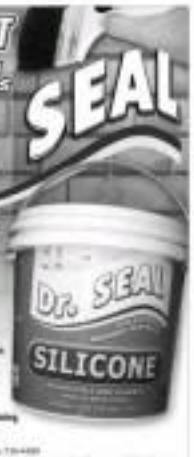

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Public shows mistrust of automated elections

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From page A1

Public mistrust of the computerized system as a mechanism to end poll cheating is reflected in a Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey conducted on Oct. 24-27 last year and released on Thursday. The survey found that another people power revolt would happen should the May elections fail.

According to the survey results, half of Filipinos believe such an event would follow an election failure. The noncommissioned survey posed the following query to the respondents: "If the 2010 elections fail for any reason, e.g. malfunctioning of the counting machines, then people power will probably happen already."

Forty-nine percent agreed with the statement, while 22 percent disagreed.

These results may not be taken as a reflection of the mood of the people to stage another Edsa revolt provoked by election irregularities. Rather it is an expression of their mistrust of the new counting machines.

The survey found that 47 percent feared the machines might be sabotaged, while 44 percent said they trusted the Comelec to ensure the safety of the ballots.

Fear of sabotage

The survey was taken in the run-up to the anniversary of the February 1986 People Power Revolution, triggered by the falsifying of the May 1984 senatorial Comelec tally of the results of the snap presidential election that month. Unofficial results canvassed by the Nassa/Bantay (National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections) then showed the opposition presidential candidate, Corazon Aquino, was leading President Ferdinand Marcos.

The SWS October survey found that the anxiety of another people power revolt is more of a failure of elections was more pronounced in Luzon outside Manila (38 percent) and Metro Manila (34 percent), the center of Edsa 1, than in Mindanao and the Visayas. In Mindanao, 40 percent agreed with the election, and in the Visayas, 31 percent agreed.

On the issue of the counting machines being rigged, respondents were asked: "The machines that will be used to count the votes in the 2010 election can easily be sabotaged in order to fake the election results."

Forty-seven percent of respondents agreed with the statement, 29 percent disagreed, while 23 percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

Fears of sabotage of the automated election count system were overshadowed by anxieties over the readiness of the Comelec to undertake the automated poll project.

Worries over delays

The Makati Business Club (MBC), a group of business organizations critical of the Arroyo administration, stepped up pressure on the Comelec to install the automated system by May 10. It added its voice to warnings by other sectors that the May elections might fall back to the traditional manual counting if the new system was not in place by May.

In a statement in the middle last week, the MBC revealed delays in the timetable of installing the new system that were likely to abort its scheduled.

The statement pointed out that the government had been reasoning to implement the project since Congress approved the Automated Election System and its budget of P1.1.2 billion in May 2009. On July 31, the Comelec approved the Smartmatic scenario for 82,200 PCOS (precinct count optical scan) machines, seven weeks behind schedule, 10 months before the May elections.

Since the award of the contract to Smartmatic in July last year, delivery of the machines has been delayed to Feb. 28, without penalties being imposed, leaving two months between delivery completion and election day.

The Comelec belatedly realized the contract did not include this required buffer hours, forcing it to scamper to amend the contract without including.

Logistics nightmare

Former Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban has pointed out the delayed delivery of the machines required shortening of the timetables and delays in the completion dates of the canvassing, field testing, training of Comelec personnel and printing of ballots.

Pangalinan has noted that with 1,630 municipalities in the country, there will be 1,630 sets of local candidates whose names will have to be printed on 1,630 types of ballots, requiring software on the machines to be customized 1,630 ways.

Customization alone presents a logistics nightmare to Comelec.

This disruptive development provides a compelling reason to the call of civil society groups, including the Makati Business Club, on the Comelec to reinvent its reform program by "the best manual election it can organize."

This fallback is as messy as the hopeless and automation project because it requires mobilization of a formal range of civil society groups, including the Church and media, to ensure a concerted effort be done and credible manual elections.

The anticipated manual system has been a breeding ground of election cheating because prolonged delays in announcing official results has offered opportunities for skewing results.

The Comelec faces a hasty and chaotic retreat, but we should ask: What will benefit from this plunge into disorder? Is the poll body capable of organizing an orderly change of plans?

(BEHIND) A Smartmatic official demonstrates how the new vote-counting machines operates.

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Energy chief warns of gasoline shortage if Shell loses imports

By Aby B. Reina

ENERGY SECRETARY ANGELO T. REYES YESterday agreed with Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. that there could be supply disruptions if the Bureau of Customs seizes some P43 billion worth of fuel imported by the giant oil firm.

"Shell can't operate as usual. The BOC may have to go through the process of bidding for the sale of the [confiscated] cargoes. But the buyer may not have the capability to store the cargo," Reyes told reporters.

He noted that "Shell has a share of over 30 percent of the market—second only to Petron."

The BOC has said it would seize, all shipments of Shell amounting to P925 million arriving between February and May alone, to serve alleged tax delinquencies resulting from the oil firm's importation of catalytic-cracked gasoline (CCG) and light catalytic cracked gasoline (LCCG) from 2004 to 2009.

Shell has disputed the tax assessment in the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA), arguing that CCG and LCCG were merely raw materials for the production of unleaded gasoline.

The oil company earlier said the BOC assessment had no legal since excise taxes were to be levied only on finished products for sale and consumption in the domestic market.

According to Reyes, the Department of Energy and the Bureau of Internal Revenue had the same position that there was no tax deficiency by Shell in its import of gasoline blending stocks to meet the requirements of the Clean Air Act.

"Final tax is levied as gasoline leaves the refinery for sale in the market," Reyes said, adding that the "BOC insists to collect tax on the intermediate product."

Shell had said the refinery of Petron shipments could lead to the closure of its Batangas refinery which employs 823 workers and losses of P13 billion a month.

With no products to sell, Shell's 958 retail stations would eventually close down. Shell's dealers accounted for 34 percent of the market as of June 2009.

These stations employ nearly 17,000 fully wage earners who also stand to lose their jobs as a result of the seizures.

Apart from Shell's 27.7 percent market share as net gas to the retail market, it also supplies 21 percent of the fuel requirements of power plants, including the National Power Corp., 17.2 percent of the entire aviation fuel market, 19.6 percent of the marine transport market, and 70.2 percent of the demand for bitumen by contractors engaged in roadwork.

Shell legal counsel and lawyer Ombudsman Ifraimir Allanda earlier said that the BOC's demand constituted double taxation since Shell had already paid billions of pesos in the finished product validation fees in refinery that were produced using the imported CCG and LCCG.

"The threatened seizure is unjust, premature and oppressive. BOC is threatening to seize Shell's shipments even if the supposed liability has yet to be determined with finality. There is still a pending case before the CTA on this issue. What makes this worse is that the BOC threatens to seize all of Shell's shipments, even those that are not CCG or LCCG," Allanda said.

On Dec. 8, the CTA issued a 60-day temporary restraining order (TRO) barring the BOC from seizing Shell's shipments.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, January 18, 2010
2nd Week in Ordinary Time
1 Sm 15:16-23
Mk 2:18-22

One day, when the disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees were fasting, some people asked Jesus, "Why is it that both the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but yours do not?" Jesus answered, "How can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the day will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them and on that day they will fast.

"No one sews a piece of new cloth on an old coat, because the new patch will shrink and tear away from the old cloth, making a worse tear. And no one puts new wine into old wineskins, for the wine would burst the skins and then both the wine and the skins would be lost. But new wine, new skins!"

Commentary

Jesus answered, 'Do you expect the guests at a wedding party to go without food?' Of course not. As long as the bridegroom is with them they will not do that. But the day will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them and then they will fast."

Life is a string of lovely stories to us.
Sometimes it's wonderful,
sometimes it's hard.
The baby dying is no exception
Amit para sa'tin.
We are not meant to be done
We are meant to enjoy life
We are expected to feel and to everything.

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AllCard optimistic on 2010 projection, perceives increased demand for smart card technology

AllCard Plastics Phils., Inc. is seeing a good year for its smart card production business after an unstable 2009.

"Last year, we already felt that many Filipinos have become more confident in using smart cards in their daily lives mostly as tools for identification. But because of unstable economic conditions, several companies and institutions with smart card related projects have put these endeavors on hold. That is going to change," AllCard Marketing Manager Franz Reyes said.

AllCard is positive that more smart card related projects will be implemented this year. In fact, AllCard might even score a higher than expected growth this year as its smart card business continues to flourish.

To support this expected progress, AllCard has set expansion goals and strategic business partnerships with renowned smart card technology experts.

AllCard Technologies Corp. has just been formed to provide smart card solutions and applications for consumer and financial institutions.

TECH Giants and Machinery Co. Ltd., the main contractor for the Taiwan Hsinta Case Smart Card Project, has exclusively partnered with AllCard to promote the advantages and benefits of smart card solutions in the Philippines.

AllCard Plastics Phils., Inc. is the leading fuel plastic card printing and production facility in the Philippines. To know more about AllCard, visit www.allcard.com.ph

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Kiwanis marks 35th by aiding kids

THE KIWANIS LUZON DISTRICT IS CELEbrating its 35th anniversary this week by helping underprivileged children and hearing-impaired students in the Rizal Metro, most of which are in Morong, the Aguinaldo Shrine in Kawit, Cavite, and the scenic hill in Sta. Rosa, Laguna.

Kiwanis is a global organization of volunteers dedicated to changing the world one child and one community at a time, with the Golden Rule as their guide. Kiwanis Week is observed in the third week of January by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 124 which was signed by President Fidel Ramos on Jan. 23, 1995.

This week, Kiwanis clubs in Luzon will undertake activities that focus on underprivileged children like medical/dental missions, iodine deficiency disorder information drives, feeding centers and schools, distribution of school supplies, especially to orphans affected areas, a campaign against prohibited drugs, and tree planting.

The celebration ends on Jan. 23 with the annual Special Games at Amoranto Stadium in Quezon City where more than 500 special children from different schools will participate. A Kiwanis Night at the Tagaytay Sports Center in Tagaytay City will also be held.

The first Kiwanis Club in the Philippines, the Kiwanis Club of Manila, was founded in 1966 by Mowary Cain, a member of Kiwanis Club of Santa Barbara, California. Kiwanis International was divided into districts each with its own board of trustees headed by a district governor. The Philippines has two districts—Philippine Luzon and Philippine South.

Children have always been the priority of Kiwanis. In 1996, the Kiwanis program, "Young Children Priority One," was launched to address the needs of children, up to 5 years of age. To keep up with the needs of the times, Kiwanis has started helping children up to 12-years-old.

Kiwanis International has 2,115 clubs with over 600,000 members. The Luzon district has 131 clubs with more than 4,000 members.

FVR foundation sets green tourism tour

THE RAMOS PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT Foundation (RPDF) headed by chair, former President Fidel V. Ramos, is coordinating its series of conferences on sustainable tourism development with different stops across the country.

RPDF is a nonprofit dedicated to the promotion of peace and development in the Philippines. The foundation dubbed "Tau Alumni" aims to help various areas of the country position themselves as top ecotourism destinations and share best practices in ecoproductivity.

Tau Alumni will visit Cebu and Bohol on Jan. 22 and 23, respectively.

The series of conferences comes amid growing concerns over climate change and the global financial crisis that have exacerbated problems in the country's tourism industry and its wider economy.

Speakers at the Tinaya stops include Ramos, Tourism Secretary Ace Durano, Cebu Governor Gwen Garcia, Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, World Wildlife Fund Philippines vice chair Jose Ma. Lorenzo Tan and chair Cecilia Ongpin, president Nicolina Lim, former tourism secretary who is the conference chair.

Alan Cajes, vice president of the Development Academy of the Philippines Center for Sustainable Resource Development, and G Solo Resorts environmental manager Manjalo Lucion will make presentations at the Cebu conference.

The Bohol conference will feature talks from Lucas Nuñag of the Bohol Provincial Tourism Council, Pamalican Island in Investment Management for the Seas of East Asia chief technical officer Adriana Sison, and Soil and Water Conservation Foundation president William Gamore.

Conference Preregistration Deadline: Jan. 25, 2010
Please visit www.fape.org.ph for details.

DepED

National Education Conference

Getting into the Core of the 2010 Secondary Education Curriculum

KEY TOPICS: Understanding by Design (UbD): Desired Results, Assessment, and Learning Plan; The Key Principles of Differentiation; Strategies for Doing Differentiated Instruction: Tiering and Beyond and Using Formative Assessment to Target Instruction; and Taking DI to a Higher Level: Planning Strategically for a Successful Differentiation Initiative

To be conducted by Profs. Everett Kline & Jeanne Purcell of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), USA, and local UbD resource speakers.

Who should attend the Conference?
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Conference Fee: Php8,500 per participant inclusive of 3 ASCD books

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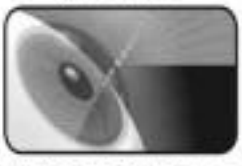

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Explain OFW's deportation, RP asks Qatar

THE PHILIPPINE EMBASSY IN QATAR has sent a note verbale to the Qatari foreign ministry seeking clarification of the circumstances surrounding the arrest and deportation of overseas Filipino worker (OFW) Jimmy Aguilar who was mistaken for a wanted killer in the Philippines, the Department of Foreign Affairs said yesterday.

A note verbale is an unsigned, third-person written communication used in diplomatic relations.

While the embassy awaits the reply of Qatari authorities, Philippine Ambassador to Qatar Consuelo Bañares relayed to the DFA that his office would help Aguilar return to the country and to his place of work in the capital Doha if he wanted to.

Aguilar should only secure a clearance from the National Bureau of Investigation or the Quezon City police that he is not Jaime Aguilar Iriks who has a warrant of arrest out for the killing of a Malacañang official's son in a road rage incident. He is the subject of an Interpol red bulletin.

"This document will be the basis for the embassy's request for the deletion of Aguilar's name from the immigration blacklist of Qatari and other Gulf Cooperation Council authorities, with which a shares database," the DFA said.

The Overseas Workers Welfare Administration is also extending assistance to Aguilar and has offered him a loan package for set up a welding shop in his native Lubungan, Dalocan.

Aguilar, 26, a documented OFW, was arrested on Dec. 31, 2009, and detained at Qatar's deportation center. He was deported to the Philippines on Jan. 7.

He was mistaken for Iriks who is facing charges for the shooting of Nonoy Eballe Jr., son of the Office of Presidential Chief of Staff Undersecretary Renato Eballe Sr., after a traffic altercation on Nov. 26, 2009.

Iriks, whose middle name is Aguilar, is still at large.

The NBI has apologized to Aguilar for the case of mistaken identity.

Angelito Magno, chief of the NBI's Special Action Unit, said a television news program last week that the agency was willing to provide an affidavit document clearing Aguilar. *Jeremie Arting and Cynthia D. Balloon*

Saudi teen posing as pilot expelled

IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES DEPORTED Saturday the Saudi Arabian teen who had entered restricted areas at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport by posing as an airline pilot.

Hani Bakhiet, 19, was flown out of the country on board Saudia Airlines flight 39-869 which took off from Naia Terminal 1 at 8:15 p.m.

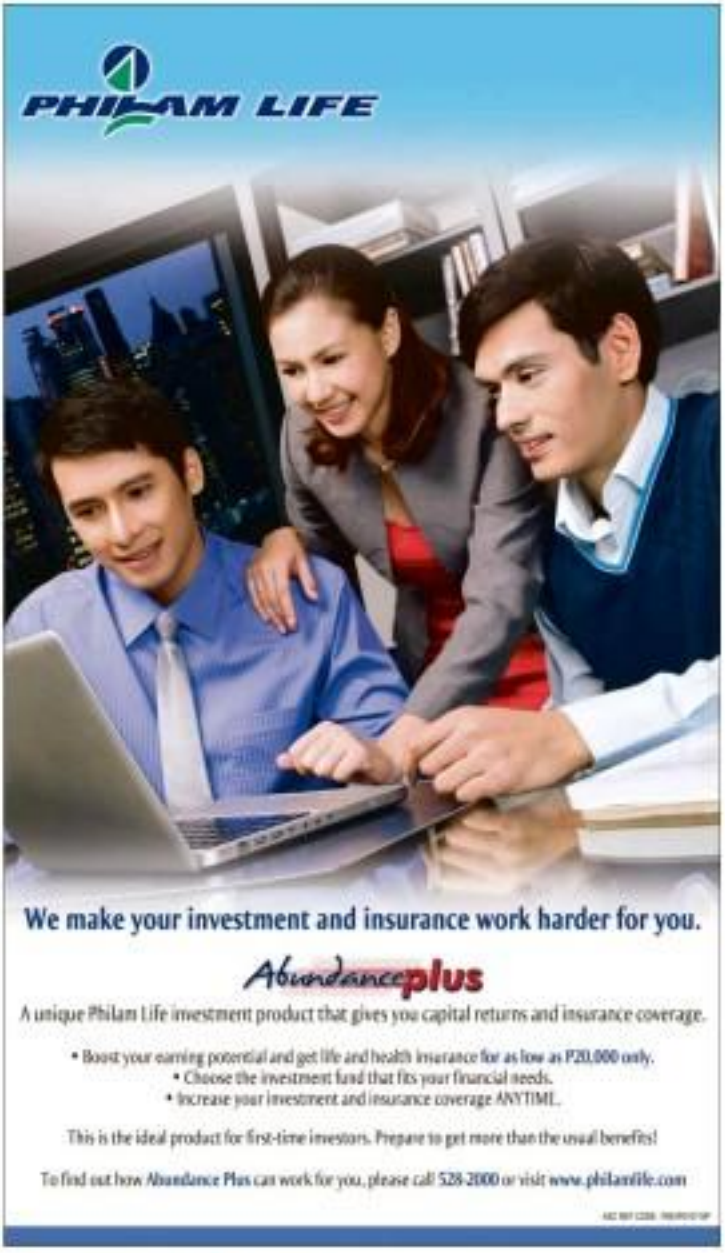
Radio reports quoted Bakhiet as apologizing to the persons who had been worried about his arrival. He also apologized to the public for the trouble he had caused.

Bakhiet was apprehended at Naia 1 last Monday for breaching airport security. He pretended to be a pilot by wearing a pilot's uniform and stayed in the arrival and departure areas for more than six hours while waiting for his father to arrive from Saudi Arabia.

When questioned by airport police, Bakhiet produced a card identifying him as a dependent of a retired Saudia employee, his father having been a pilot of the airline. He said he was a student at a flying school in Pasay City but this was later disputed. His student passport had expired two months ago.

The Manila International Airport Authority, which operates the Naia, charged Bakhiet with trespassing, impersonation as well as usurpation of authority for posing as a pilot, which is forbidden by International Civil Aviation Organization regulations.

Bakhiet was ordered deported by the Bureau of Immigration. He was blacklisted and can't return to the Philippines. *Jeremie Arting*



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More party-list groups means a longer ballot

From page A1

acronyms only or provide matching numbers," Jimenez said in an interview over radio station dzBB.

Enumerated in the newly system, 26 inches is about 66 centimeters or two-thirds of a meter; 28 inches is 71.04 cm or nearly three-fifths of a meter.

Jimenez, who is the director of the Comelec's education and information department, said that aside from the names of the party-list groups, each ballot would include the names of 80 presidential and 82 vice-presidential candidates.

The Institute of Political and Electoral Reform (Iper) blasted the Comelec for its problems on the long ballot.

"They appeared on many party-list groups, which is higher than in 2007. I think they genuinely erred in screening the party-list groups, especially if the Supreme Court already pruned them with the guidelines," Iper executive director Ramon Casiple told the Inquirer in a phone interview.

Numbers confusing

Casiple said that if the length of the ballot was a problem, then it could either print the names on the ballot in smaller font to make it square rather than rectangular.

Jimenez's proposals to cut numbers in the ballot to remove the party-list groups might only lead to confusion, Casiple said.

"I think we can't do anything exactly," he said, adding that the principle of the Comelec is to make the contents of the ballot clear to the voter.

Yet another party-list group is attempting to get on the ballot after it was first scrapped, then scratched from the official race.

Arare warning

The Alliance for Rural Agrarian Reconstruction (Arare) warned that its members belonging to 128 organizations nationwide would mount protests against its rejection.

Arare's secretary general Elmer Cabrido said that the Comelec had denied on Jan. 5 a resolution giving the green light to its petition for registration as a sectoral party.

But 10 days later, the Comelec released Resolution No. 8744 that contradicted the list of 144 accredited party-list groups. Arare was among those stricken off by the Comelec.

"Whether inadvertently or on purpose, the commission of Arare ... has sparked anger and aroused confusion among those who recognize your Republican platform for a better deal for rural and urban poor folks and our goal towards genuine land reform and agricultural progress," Cabrido said.

The group is filing today a motion for reconsideration. Report by Jhon Aristophen Aning and Oliver Cabacungan Jr.

Bombs harder to find when threat is rare

From page A1

—like a gun or knife or an explosive device hidden in a suitcase—they often have very little sparkling it, the researchers found.

The reverse is also true. When something is very common, people tend to see it everywhere they look, even when if it is not there, said Jeremy Wolfe of Harvard Medical School, whose study appears in the journal Current Biology.

"It is clear that if you don't find it often, you often don't find it," Wolfe said in a telephone interview.

That means that if you look for 20 guns in a stack of 40 bags, you'll find more of them than if you look for the same 20 guns in a stack of 2,000 bags.

"We really want to understand why that is happening," Wolfe said.

For the current study, Wolfe and his colleagues worked with the US Department of Homeland Security's Transportation Security Laboratory. The department sent Wolfe's team images of empty suitcases and images of items typically found in them.

"We have suitcases that basically packs bags. It takes an empty bag and throws some clothes in it and maybe some cords and such—and maybe it throws a gun or a knife in there," Wolfe said.

"We either had those show up 50 percent of the time or 2 percent of the time," he said.

Then they recruited 15 volunteers to look for guns or knives in the bags.

When they found weapons were much more likely to spot a weapon when there were a lot of them tucked away in the luggage; but when they were rare, they had much more trouble finding them.

"If it shows up 50 percent of the time, in our particular experiments, they missed about 7 percent of the targets that were there. If it shows up on only 2 percent of the times, they missed about 30 percent of the time," Wolfe said.

Scanners need humans

"Basically, you'll miss more of them in that big stack than in the little stack," he said.

Wolfe said the findings have some implications for things scrutinized x-rays like baggage screening in airports because some of the scanners currently in use—or even the more advanced whole body scanners under the UK government—can spot risks without the aid of humans.

The same is true for other screening tasks. Wolfe said that mammography screening for breast cancer "or this point, there is no computer that can look at an X-ray of a breast and say, 'I can tell you with absolute certainty that this is or is not bad.'"

Computer systems are quite good at pointing out trouble spots, but they often point out too many potential risks, making it harder for scientists to find the real threats.

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New energy usec

ENERGY SECRETARY ANGELO T. REYES has named new office new Undersecretary Mary Ann Magsaysay-Ochoterena.

Magsaysay-Ochoterena is the first Filipino to graduate from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government's course on Strategic Management of Regulatory and Enforcement Agencies.

She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Economics degree from the University of the Philippines where she also completed her Master's in Public Administration studies concentrating on Regional Development based on the Rational Framework on Physical Planning.

Before being named energy undersecretary, she was a member of the Eastern Tomarong Council. She was also CEO of Magsaysay International Shipping Inc.

She replaced Undersecretary Mel Salazar.

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OPINION

Unleashing catastrophe

EDITORIAL

THE DECISION OF THE SUPREME COURT TO reverse itself on the League of Cities case last December, after its original ruling had become final and executory late May, is a striking straw breeze placed directly under the rule of law. When it explodes, the first casualty will be the Court itself.

In the constitutional crisis that shook the country after more than a third of the members of the House of Representatives voted to impeach Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. in 2003, the role of the Court as final arbiter of legal controversies was vigorously affirmed.

At that time, we wrote in this space: "The mere fact that some of the country's best legal minds ... could not agree on a single position on the issue at hand is not a sign of confusion. It is a sign that the law may be a demanding mistress, but it is not an exact science. It is also proof that, if the Supreme Court did not exist, it would be necessary to invent it. Top lawyers may argue about the constitutionality of an issue, but at a certain point somebody must step in and decide. According to the Constitution, that somebody is not the Senate or the House; it is the Supreme Court."

But last Dec. 16, a decisive majority of its justices voted against this very principle. The Court's reversal of the original League of Cities decision violated the governing idea that "at a certain point somebody must step in and decide." The Court had in fact already stepped in and decided on the fate of the 16 cityhood laws that were the subject of the case; they were deemed unconstitutional by majority vote on Nov. 18, 2008; a motion for reconsideration was rejected by majority vote; a second motion for reconsideration was denied by a tie vote. On May 21, 2009, the ruling became final and executory.

And yet the Court decided to open the case again. Justice Antonio Carpio's withering dissent in the League of Cities case quoted the petitioners' view that "[e]ssentially, respondents craftily phrased and titled their motions based on the Court's last denial order or resolution, and deliberately avoided reference to the previous repeated denials by the Court." It is a shame that enough members of the Court agreed to reopen the case despite such duplicitous conduct.

It is a bigger shame, indeed it is a cause for apprehension about the future of the high court itself, that enough justices voted to overturn the ruling.

The argument against revisiting decisions already deemed final and executory is settled consensus; it is a by-now-unremarkable part of the law of the land. Carpio's dissent offers a rigorous restating of the Court's precious rulings. "Well-entrenched is the rule that a decision that has acquired finality becomes immutable and unalterable, no longer subject to attack and cannot be modified directly or indirectly, and the court which rendered it, including this Court, had lost jurisdiction to modify it. The Court laid down this rule precisely '(1) to avoid delay in the administration of justice and thus procedurally, to make orderly the discharge of judicial business, and; (2) to put an end to judicial controversies, at the risk of occasional errors, which is why errors exist.'"

And yet the Supreme Court not only revisited the case; it reversed itself. This unfortunate series of events can only erode the people's confidence in the rule of law, and undermine the credibility of the Court. We can, legitimately, ask: If there is no such thing as a final and executory ruling, can there be an end to legal and judicial controversies? If the Supreme Court declines to respect its own jurisprudence, can anyone expect the ordinary citizen to respect the Court's rulings? If sheer majority rule, not the hallowed principle of facts and the law, determines the decisions of the Supreme Court, can the public stop itself from trusting the justices as the politicians they have become?

Carpio's dissent defined the stakes. "Such an unprecedented ruling would resurrect contentious political issues long ago settled ... Countless other decisions of this Court would come back to haunt it ... Such a ruling would destabilize not only this Court, but also the Executive and Legislative Branches ... Business transactions made pursuant to final decisions of this Court would also unravel for another round of litigation ... This Court cannot afford to undertake such a catastrophe on the nation."

The bomb is ticking.

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Another 'chop-chop' road in Eastern Samar

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz

SOMETIME AGO, THIS COLUMN EXPOSED the "chop-chop" road project in Northern Samar which residents had denounced. Instead of making travel in the province easier, the project made it more difficult because of the driving actions of the road, awarded to and constructed by different contractors, were not finished at their junctions. Where the whole road project should have been one smooth, continuous highway, huge gaping holes were left where the different projects ended. Commuters claim the unfinished sections were outside their contracts, and so those were left to limbo. The potholes became bigger and bigger and sometimes when a passenger bus came to these sections, passengers were made to get off while the bus went over the holes to the other side, after which the passengers were allowed to climb on board again.

Well, they are at it again in neighboring Eastern Samar. One major item in the 2010 budget of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is P500-million for the construction of 20 kilometers of the Wright-Taft-Borongan-Guiuan section of the national highway.

This is a project of President Maguindanao Arroyo and was intended to be just one road project. After all, it is just one stretch of the national road from Wright to Guiuan. But the administration for the district was able to chop the projects into 12 packages or sub-contracts to be awarded to different local contractors.

Why chop it into smaller projects? Because under the law, small projects are implemented by the DPWH district office. Big projects are implemented by the department's regional or national office.

This P500-million project was submitted to and approved by Congress as a single project. After all, it is more cost-effective and much easier to implement and ensure the quality of the road project if it is done by a single, reputable construction company instead of being built independently by 12 different contractors.

But something fishy happened to the budget on the way to the DPWH planning division. It was broken up into 12 different smaller projects because of the arm-twisting of the congressman.

Why? So that the congressman would have a say in the selection of his favored contractors who will corner the 12 road projects. It is public knowledge that DPWH district officers are controlled by congressmen. And that contractors kick back a portion of the contract price to the congressman who chose them. And it being an election year, we all know that congressmen need funds for the poll campaign. In other words, this P500-million road project in Eastern Samar is in "aid of reelection."

The DPWH allows its district offices to implement projects worth up to P10 million each. A district office can implement projects worth up to P50-million each, provided it secures an exemption from the DPWH secretary. Other than projects costing P200 million up to P500 million against are to be implemented by the DPWH regional office while projects costing more than P500 million are to be implemented by the DPWH's central or national office only.

The scheme to divide the single P500-million road project into 12 smaller projects is a violation of Section 14.1.c of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the Procurement Law, which prohibits the splitting of government contracts.

It provides that: "Splitting of government contracts is when the division or breaking up of government contracts into small quantities, or dividing contract implementation into several phases or sub-contracts for the purpose of evading and circumventing the requirements of the law for the alternative methods of procurement."

Secretary Vic Domingo succeeded the secretary upon his assumption of the top DPWH post. He found the projects awaiting his signature for this bunch of 12 projects on his desk. They were requested by DPWH district engineer Ernesto Dalusos and endorsed by Rep. Teodoro Cagulllo of the lone district of Eastern Samar.

However, Dalusos' immediate boss, DPWH regional director Angelito Tarayao, was not, unlike the congressman, overly silent about these requests. Indeed, he had been opposing them.

Not notably, apparently arming that the project would only be used "in aid of reelection," budget Secretary Rolando Andaya Jr. has not released a single peso to finance the "chop-chop" projects. And because the elections are just around the corner and the ban on public works projects will already take effect on March 26, it would be in the public interest if the project were to be implemented after the elections to prevent it from being used as a campaign gimmick. Surely, the people of Eastern Samar would be the bigger loser if this scheme is not nipped in the bud.

If the P500-million project will not be chopped up, it naturally has to be implemented by the DPWH central office and probably awarded after public bidding, to highly competent and reputable companies like the EE Cruz or Hilmarc's or by foreign construction companies with enabling security in infrastructure projects.

But if allowed to divide the project into 12 sub-contracts—and putting all of these under the supervision of the province's district office—the two proponents of this "chop-chop" proposal (Cagulilla and Padiroc) will put this road project out only at risk but may also reason taxpayers' money. Instead of being constructed by a reputable construction company, the 12 projects would be made separately by smaller and locally based contractors whose track records in road construction may not be all that great.

Televise it

There's the Rub

Conrado de Quiros

I REMEMBER AGAIN SOMETHING I HEAR many years ago. The traffic cops in one province in Thailand were up in arms over their chief and wanted to take legal action against him. The reason: That chief was not directing the ong many money they had extorted from drivers equitably or as all. He was keeping much of it to himself. That was injustice, the cops figured, and they wanted redress.

The lesson is simple: You get used to malfeasance, you no longer see it, or you see it as perfectly normal. It's other things you find abnormal or a source of inequity.

I remembered this when I read about Philip Pamfilon, the Ampatuans' lawyer, complaining bitterly over Maguindanao's governor, Andal Ampatuan Jr., not having enough money to buy his clients. After all his clients did for GMA, he said, she's dropped them like a hot potato. "The Ampatuans truly helped the First Family in so many instances and favors in the past," he said. Specifically, they made her province the number one votes for Fernando Poe Jr. in Maguindanao in 2004.

GMA's ingratitude is in fact only as big as it is often in a police chief not distributing long among subordinates. Maybe it is injustice, but the real fundamental, matter-of-fact injury—the one committed against the people—is the nature of the Ampatuans' "service." Clearly, Pamfilon sees nothing wrong in 954 getting zero votes in a place where people about the master system at the sight of the till balm-making him responsible for his character.

It's things like this that make me add my voice to the call for the Ampatuans' ouster—Andal for multiple murder and his relatives for rebellion—to be made public. Specifically by televising it. (The national treasurer, for that.)

The flaw in that is someone the court will use. I've always thought we needed to add to that adage, "the court will out," the corollary, "often unwillingly." It's much of wisdom like the one Pamfilon has dropped on us that. I'd like to see more of it, and believe you only get to see it by televising it. (The national treasurer, for that.) That Pamfilon not aired his gripe before TV—for as, satisfied a presence for the purpose—was bright news but this gets completely. Or it might have been completely to private complaints, a much wasted one sure in that part of the world or he sees, but which could always be dismissed as hearsay. If the Ampatuans' lawyer can say something like that, imagine what they threw, when you get right down to it, is the whole system. Before you get to the commissioners. Truly will say most supremely than the wisest of "Smiley" meddling into Ilocos Manila.

That should be made more to the people like the Court Justice, Gaspar Bersamin, saying the Ampatuans could stop complaining about being dropped like a hot potato and be thankful he hasn't been dropped a stake on them. Which, not quite inadvertently conveys them in Maguindanao's eyes. Let Bersamin say that to the Ampatuans' trials just being snatched by the public like they're supposed to, and let's see who makes silence in this fragile balance of terror, or threat.

The second is that it assures clean elections. The Ampatuans' trials are not just about multiple murders and rebellion, they are about electoral fraud. Or since "electoral fraud" sounds like a walk in the park, they are about a misuse of power and the multiple murder of democracy.

President's remarks, whatever his intentions, have been and right on the head. The wholesale theft by EDSA of the vote in 2004 and the wholesale slaughter by the Ampatuans of their enemies are sinister and effect. We need to see the source. We need to know exactly what exactly happened in Maguindanao in May 2004, we need to know exactly what happened in Ampatuan in January 2009. We need to know exactly what we're dealing with here. We need to know exactly what we're dealing with here. We need to know exactly what we're dealing with here.

It is never too late to put on record, with its vast legal implications in the event of a change of elections, that the presidency has been vacated all this time. The one who has been occupying it was never elected.

It's also the only guarantee that what happened there will not happen here. Why should we think we can have clean elections today when we haven't yet done something about the dirty elections the last time around? And with the same people in place?

And finally, the reason why the Ampatuans' trials matter a helter country. It will be the ONE important level we never had.

The trials should shed light not just on the warped psychology that made the massacre of 58 possible, but on the warped psychology that made the massacre of the people's votes possible. It should give a face, or put flesh and blood, on the otherwise abstract phrase, "violation of democracy." Enough to make us vow never again to allow, "Never again."

The closest we've had to a trial saved us of one thing. That was our penchant for voting for people who earn from enter-tainment, most of whom stopped being entertaining by entertaining thoughts of political careers. That both opened the floodgates for them and closed the floodgates for them, the latter by repelling the public with face that became more bloodthirsty than any of his bloodhounds, the reality done to end all reality shows, the impeachment trial. After that, the entertainers' political fortunes fell into a precipitous decline.

The Ampatuans' trials, which will also be in-facto GMA's impeachment trial, will save us of yet one more thing. That is our penchant for voting for evpos who come back with a vengeance after Erap's conviction and exile. We can see by far the most evidence country of politicians, their logical end, their reductio ad absurdum, although there's nothing absurd about oppression from the point of view of the victims, being Marcos and stolen, and the evil they do, oppression, murders and impunity that they reveal.

Let's do ourselves a favor and demand it: Televise it.

An end to 'midnight' appointments

I HAD ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO CONTINUE my dialogue with Odell on the issue of collegiality, but the issue of who should appoint the next chief justice has grown more and more urgent. Collegiality can wait.

Since, however, there are so many issues involved regarding the appointment of a chief justice after CJ Pano retires on May 17, I shall write in telegraphic style:

• It is important to remember that the probable one-year appointment term must be limited. A presidential election could rile-end of the incumbent's term was inspired by the opposition to the Supreme Court of President Garcia's scandalous "midnight appointments" before President Diosdado Macapagal assumed office.

• But the prohibition against midnight appointments is unwise. It is general, whereas the command in Article VIII to fill the vacancy in 90 days is optional in the Supreme Court. An accepted principle is that a special law overrules one spoken to a general law.

• But again Article VIII is to be narrowly construed, whereas Article VIII is positive, therefore accepted principle is that negative language carries stronger mandate than positive ones.

• However, where laws are apparently in conflict, jurisprudence also says that efforts should be made to put effect to both when possible. Is there no obvious possible way?

• Yes, it is possible. The prohibition against appointments starts March 26 and lasts only until June 30 (the period for filling a vacancy [90 days] lasts only 35). The new President will therefore have still forty about 40 days after June 30 to make the appointment. Both Article VII and this Article VIII continue effect.

• The original period proposed for filling vacancies in the Supreme Court was 60 days; it was extended to 90 days without debate. Jose Commissioner Commissioner Bernas, who was present in the Constitution believes that the vacancy can wait 90 days. There is no notice issued in the Constitutions now.

• However, according to the Aytona case (1962) and the Valenzuela case (1996), when the President-elect is known, the authority of the incumbent is only to ensure an orderly transfer of power. Call it an argument from necessity or definition. Under this accustomed doctrine, we should know who the new President will be by May 17 to next office.

• The power to appoint is activated only when a vacancy occurs. The vacancy will occur only on May 17. But by then President Aquino will only have power to make temporary appointments in the executive department. Theodore Roosevelt correctly drew a distinction attempt to amend the Constitution.)

• Appointment is a two-step short. It involves offer and acceptance. A person who accepts nomination appointment is complicit in the violation of the prohibition against midnight appointments. He could be disqualified for culpable violation of the Constitution.

• Appointment to fill an anticipated vacancy is valid only if the person making the appointment will have the power to make the appointment.

• The President can appoint only from a list given by the JBC. Let's Aquino make appointments without a JBC list, as Senator Pimentel for the comedy results, but only when there was or no JBC.

• The JBC is duty-bound to submit a list, but only when there is a vacancy not necessarily extant.

• However, the JBC has no authority to decide whether there is an impending vacancy. The JBC can only prepare a list for whoever has authority to appoint. The JBC is not the Supreme Court.

• In substantive terms, the chief justice has only one role out of 15. In administrative matters, the CJ's absence can be handled, and has always been handled, internally by the other justices of the Supreme Court. Through a designation temporary presiding officer. To say that the 14 remaining justices will not be able to temporarily run the Supreme Court pro tempore without a chief justice is a tacit slur of them, one of whom will almost certainly be the next chief justice.

• Problem: that can arise during the coming elections do not automatically need a chief justice (1) Congress is the sole judge of the election, returns and qualifications of its own members, and (2). (1) The House of Representatives Electoral Tribunals relates to elected justice members participate. (2) Presidential elections must come to the Supreme Court, but the Chief Justice is not the Supreme Court. At most he is only one-tenth out of 15. (3) The same can be said about appeals to the 82 of election courts. The quorum of the Court en banc is only eight, not 15.

• The only instance I can think of where the presence of the chief justice might be indispensable is when the President is convicted on impeachment. But I cannot see that coming any time soon.

• The most likely scenario is that the President-elect will appoint the temporary absence of a chief justice but the possible conversion of the Supreme Court into a plaything of politicians pro. The Supreme Court itself should resist that. The Supreme Court loses its effectiveness when it is seen as a political object, threatening endless reconsideration of decisions.

• My suspicion arising from all of this is that the rush to appoint a chief justice before the ousting of a new President is being orchestrated, and the appointee is an unstated promise of reasons, by lawyers and counsel for Palace.

• A final word. Those who assist President Aquino to appoint the next chief justice might as well forget Odell. CJ Pano's letter made clear that Odell does not qualify. Besides, Chief Justice Odell would not be a unanimous choice. Odell would not be a unanimous choice but an unwelcome political solution. I doubt, though, that CJ Pano would want to leave that as his legacy after a distinguished career in law.

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

An officer and a gentleman, truly

THIS TIME I DECIDED TO TAKE A BREATHER FROM election-watching and pass these lines cooling down on an idle recent canvas. I have decided to do so mainly to give myself the time needed to write a worthy piece for the next month of February—EDSA's 3rd Edition's countdown of climax. Mistah Ang-Aquino's departure from Malacañang. Everybody needs a break, for heaven's sake.

Besides, life as usual is romantic. This time I'm going to write about love and romance, a leap of beginning to a happier ending. And it couldn't have happened to a more perfect pair.

But a little flashback to explain how life's ruins and ruins succeeds one day and tonight you're in dreams and you're not sure if you're awake.

It was 1975. I was working with the defunct Department of Public Information and Guidance organized by the Civilian Relations Service of which was then the Southern Command. Occidental Mindoro was my area of responsibility and the province's governor-cum-provincial commander was Col. Mariano Ibañez.

The two were comfortable with me because we spoke the same language, so comfortable that apparently they told me much more than I was supposed to know and I was "punished" by it. I was transferred to Manila, where I was assigned a half-life assistant audio-tapes and would not leave the compound they were confined with my work.

My equipment was a standard office Olympia typewriter and if you think that was loud enough, try to imagine having just typing. Typing, typing, typing. So to hell with the typewriter, I said to myself and I just used it. Even though I still typed.

I could leave the typewriter only for trips to the bathroom, which stopped soon enough when I got duly drained for some I could and evenpee to the nearest restaurant. Or when I was so hungry that I offered me ate. All I had with me was half a pack of cigarettes, and unless I ran out of it (I helped it was and was only half enough by 8 p.m.) I thought this was it.

I suffered around the office straining to hug the typewriter until another's pack, a new brand, and I came to a desk with a pack of Winston (not my brand) on it and behind it sat a lieve officer. Josh

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Nonalyn Manlapaz

ued hostility, with a shock of jet-black hair that made him look more handsome.

"Can I have a stick?" I said. He looked up from the papers he was holding and looked at me straight with what looked like a mixture of annoyance and surprise that I was there. I understood the pack was not for me without saying anything.

By the way to my typewriter, I asked a female staffer who he was. "Commander Blanton Bopson," she replied with a smirk.

A few months later he became my boss.

I can't remember just how his official title was, but he was South Cota commander Brew Sales. Bopson to Republic's most trusted. He wrote all of Republic's speeches. And with all the responsibilities on his shoulder (he always seemed to work between 16 and 18 hours), some of the speech writing was passed on to me.

It wasn't a dream job for the two of us because Republic was a man of few words, so they say. In one draft I submitted to Commander Bopson (that's how he still always be known to me) he wrote, "We are not for war." I asked him if "Can you send me mail?" But I will always remember one targeted note: "That is perfect!"

And when we were made to meet a look in all days by Republic upon the order of Madame himself, Bopson was the one going to get me. Because no one ever dared to disturb President Ferdinand Marcos for his birthday), he had a typewriter and also supplies brought to my house so I could work at home instead of commuting to headquarters like the rest of the rank-and-file, and he just communicates, with me through a radio because he's a sailor who appeared almost daily. The book was later made into a film, "Legalista ni Kilangan."

He also asked me to edit his term book, "Laughter in the Shark," which was a compilation of anecdotes about the officer's service in Mindoro and Basilan. As he said, that's all he did was here, then a laughter too." If you then the height of the so-called "Mindoro conflict," with bloodshed and fierce skirmishes between the Moro National Liberation Front and government forces.

But laughter he was, and I would find the laughter and see the joke. I was actually no more of him from a far beginning. Must get around that he was a "company wizard" and up until then the only computer hardware I saw in my life was an absolutely humongous and incomprehensible machine in the basement of Malacañang.

After Admiral Republic retired from military service, Commander Bopson and I lost touch and through the years I would often wonder how he was. Then one day I received an e-mail that was titled "Is this the last post," which I knew you on about how would this brilliant man end his.

Now he regularly sends me copies of his daily columns. "Wall of Thinking," the writing of which apparently left him enough time to go a-courting and finally with a perfect mate.

I met and knew Ms. Cecilia Montemayor personally but Dave loved and serve her in her love appointments on TV and do admire her for her stress and adversities and for not spoiling her makeover any other way.

The first inkling I had that destiny had brought the two together was when I received a text message from Republic saying I was about to get a

LETTERS

What do candidates say about WB/IMF?

BASED ON WHAT THEY TELL US TO BOYCOT their advertisements and to some extent, the leading presidentiables—Senator Legarda, Mayor Villar, Erap Estrada, Gibo Teodoro and Dick Gordon—are for eliminating poverty and corruption. They will eliminate poverty by creating jobs, providing education and delivering health care. It is not very clear how each of them will make corruption disappear, but all of them are nasty against corruption.

All of them, however, are quiet—considerably quiet—about the debt conditions imposed upon our country by the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The trouble is that while these debt conditions operate, poverty in our country will ensure rather than recede, as most white-set do. In general, these conditions are liberalization, deregulation, privatization and level playing field. (In the economy, we do trade to liberalize, deregulate, privatize and level the playing field regardless of the consequences for the vast majority of our people and to our own business.

Since 1982, under Presidents Ferdinand Marcos, up to now under President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, we have been implementing, privatizing and leveling the playing field, not because it is in our national interest to do so, but because it is in the interest of multinational corporations, broker the Bretton Woods institutions. Foreign debt resulted from the imposition of these policies. Billions of dollars in the 1970s were wiped out, including foreign debt (or potential inflicted) to some here by the Bell Trade Act like Colgate-Palmolive and Johnson & Johnson. Under globalization, they stopped manufacturing and transferred their subsidiaries to traders, throwing out of job thousands of their employees.

The way things are in our country today, either we adjust our economic policies and programs to make WB-IMF debt conditions work for the benefit of our people or, if this is not possible, we implement the prescription outlined in Article XII of our Constitution which calls for strategic suspension between our government and our private sector in the exploitation of natural resources and in the development of public utilities. To many still and will rely on improving credit ratings to be able to borrow more, as has happened during the nine years of the Arroyo regime, is to sink deeper in poverty and corruption.

—ARMANDO DOÑOG,
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Within 15 days of letter, the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Absence of Erap, other aspirants explained

"ONLY 3 COME TO DINNER. WHERE ARE the others?"

In reply to that question posted in a Instagram story of the Jan. 11 Inquirer issue, former President Joseph Ejercito Estrada's absence at the "Dinner Forum on Philippine Credibility and Competitiveness in the Global" at the Intercontinental Manila in Makati on Jan. 14 was due to an earlier commitment.

We are compelled to make so given already as the news item appeared to place great importance on a question raised by former President Fidel V. Ramos, and created a false impression that our standard-bearer might just be avoiding head-to-head encounters with other presidential candidates.

You may recall that President Estrada was an active participant in several of the earlier debates organized by various groups and organizations including the 2012 Forum on the 10% Minimum Wage Increase Bill at the Manila Jaipur Bureau of the GMA-7 network; and the 2012 Inquirer at Para Atbanda, Manila. Note that the Millennium Decade Forum had basically the same audience and was held at the same venue, ABS.

Former President Estrada has already received 21 invitations thus far and last, in fact, accepted several of those which are scheduled for the next few weeks, among them: Governance Forum sponsored by the Philippine Panorama Society, Inc. (P); Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Cebu, Jan. 23; Ilo-Ilo Solo Forum, Jan. 29; De La Salle Bacoor-Dasi, Feb. 2; PBI forum, Feb. 5; PBCIM, Feb. 7; Pampa, Feb. 11; Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Feb. 13; and the Ateneo Forum organized by Louis Narcisa Lewis on Feb. 13.

While it is our sincere desire to support the candidate-centric campaign and does refrain from creating any form of opposition on the other presidential candidates, it is perhaps worthwhile to note that Manny Villar has limited shorthand than President Estrada.

It would be physically impossible for President Estrada, or any other presidential candidate for that matter, to accept all the invitations he receives. But he intends to be present in many of them, subject of course to his availability. Organizers of these forums must understand that during the campaign season, a candidate must also set aside precious time to go around the country and meet with his allies, party leaders and volunteers in political meetings and conventions. Only in this way can election-related issues as critical as governance be explored, as with Secretary Leni Robredo's rally in Manila on Jan. 14.

We hope the collaborate clarifies the reasons for President Estrada's inability to attend the six-hour forum, but I personally assure Presidential friends a more than ready willing and able to take on all debate matters in any public forum anywhere in the country.

—JOSEPHINE BACERA,
Campaign Manager of
President Joseph Ejercito Estrada

Case vs Irishman already dismissed

THE LEGAL SERVICES OF THE Archdiocese of Manila removed Fr. Frank Mosser who was the subject of an article posted on your Internet inquirer.net under your Inquirer Headlines/Metro dated Dec. 20, 2007 and titled "Priest arrested in Pampanga."

May I therefore inform you that the case filed against our client is/also thereto before the City Prosecutor's Office of Manila was ordered dismissed for insufficiency of evidence in its Resolution dated Feb. 7, 2008, a copy of which is attached as Annex "A" for your ready reference.

The article in question posted in your Internet service proved to be detrimental and prejudicial to our client's stay here in the Philippines, for the simple reason that it became the object of all sort of humorous from the audience.

It is for this very important reason that our client sought the assistance of our office in bringing to your attention the dismissal of the case in question, coupled with a request that the article appeared in your website be withdrawn.

Your favorable action on this justifiable request would be greatly appreciated. I remain your sincerest best.

—JUANITO E. BERLANO,
counsel/Fred Mosser,
Sinsuat Law Office,
11 Gandhi St., Midtown Subd.,
San Roque, Marikina City

Palparan is clear and present danger

JOVITO PALPARAN, THE CONfessional representative of the party-list group, has been portrayed by Bertolt Brecht in his notorious Decembrist, [c.1]&[10] as engaged in witch-hunting. He believes that communism is evil. "A devil-ism ruler."

Palparan has apparently not included that, outside "communism" has been tainted by history except perhaps, during the period of the early Christians, as suggested by Bertolt in his "The Story of Civilization." Palparan does not, of course, distinguish between socialists and communists, communists and socialists, Marx and Mao, Stalin de Lima and Celia de Lima.

He would be at a loss to unfold these drawings, where communists labeled either the Iron Curtain in Europe or the Bamboo Curtain in Asia have been officially designated "socialist," not "communist," names for would refuse to abandon their "communist" here as every and legally participated in the electoral processes to enlighten their citizens, as in Yugoslavia and the Scandinavian countries.

Palparan has been said to be Marcos, Lopez, Tuliao, Duterte or Enrile, although that, for he would unquestioned beliefs or presented peculiar more simply be blasted out of the earth; hence, as pointed out by Bertolt, he would encompass the Catholic Church, Islam and many Protestantism religions. But such liberal progressive institutions, like the University of the Philippines, we may add, are not exempt from Palparan's watchfears.

The Mels and Aileen reporters are invited to Palparan's version of human rights and forced disappearances or victims, militants and peasants. While denying these charges, he readily admits that, on occasions, he has ingested his own "to violate the law" by arrest he would use reasonable force, self to the dangle of a democratic Philippine reforming pluralism, political dissidents or rioters, and encouraging leaders or arms—even to the left to the far right, communist and fascist, rioters and arsonists.

MacCarthyism, enjoyed in the United States since the middle of the late century, appears to enthuse in the hearts of the good congressmen. This former general appears to become a master simple to found bolshies and communists, as he upper chamber, to his Going world, anything that "looks" walks, or quacks like a duck" must be a duck. Its elsewhere does not like the body language of, among other people, this bonsai-size, the former commander of Marcos to Congress. But between him and BERNARDO, a circle of theirs Hacienda Luisita, who gave him his presidential service, Palparan definitely eclipses Bernardo as a political animal. Bernardo is no innocent way of life.

—NELSON S. LOCSIN,
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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Burgonia

55 bets in Maguindanao disqualified

By Jeannette Andrade

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC) has disqualified 55 candidates in Maguindanao for not being registered voters in the towns they are running in May.

In Minute Resolution No. 09-0046, the Comelec said the candidates for mayor, vice mayor and councilor violated the Omnibus Election Code (OEC), as well as the Local Government Code when they named in their certificates of candidacies (CoCs) that they were registered voters in the Maguindanao towns where they live.

"The commission resolves to disqualify the foregoing candidates for not being registered voters of the respective municipalities where they seek to be elected," read the resolution.

The disqualification was done by the Comelec main project, or on its own, following an investigation made by the poll body's law department. The resolution was dated Dec. 22, 2009, but published in the Comelec website only on Friday.

A state of emergency remains in Maguindanao after the Nov. 23 massacre of 57 members and supporters of a political clan and journalists in Ampatuan town.

The commission noted that the Local Government Code of 1991 states that "no elective local official must be a registered voter in the barangay, municipality, city, or province or, in the case of a member of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, Sangguniang Panlungsod, or Sangguniang Bayan, the district where he intends to be elected."

The Comelec law department was also instructed to file election offense cases against the disqualified candidates for violating Section 74 of the OEC, which requires candidates to declare in their CoCs their complete eligibility to run, including the area where they are registered voters.

An election offense could result in imprisonment of one to six years, disqualification from public office and deprivation of the right of suffrage.

Of the candidates disqualified, 42 belong to the administration Lakas-Kampi-CMD, and 13 are running as independents.

Thousands join Sinulog; pols make appearance

By Jhonnex Napallacan and Chito Aragon
Inquirer Visayas

CEBU CITY—POLITICIANS seeking national posts undoubtedly did their stories and took advantage of the tens of thousands of people who packed the streets of the city for the world-famous Sinulog fiesta, out on Sunday.

Six million to 8 million people marked the 20th Sinulog grand parade despite the inconsistent rain, according to police. And while the crowd swam, the politicians were not far behind.

Leading the pack of candidates who made sure their faces registered in the crowd were Nacionalista Party-endorsed candidate Sen. Manny Villar, his running mate Sen. Loren Legarda and members of his senatorial slate—lawyer Adel Tamano, Rep. Bongbong Marcos, party-list Rep. Sarah Gonzales, former Rep. Gilbert Remulla, Susan Ople and Gloria Macapagal.

Villar and his party even broke the security line and shook hands with spectators.

Villar's party had just arrived from Kalibo town to Aklan where they also took part in the Ati-Atihan Festival, held on the same day as the Sinulog and also in honor of Sto. Niño, Cebu's patron saint.

Administration senator and reelectionist Ramon "Bong" Revilla decided not to take in the crowds and went instead to the Cebu City Sports Center, where the contingents' final dances were held and judged.

THOUSANDS of devotees pay homage to the miraculous image of Santo Nio. Mins inside the pilgrimage center of Basilica del Santo Nio in Cebu City Saturday morning. (CHRIS NAVALES/INQUIRER VISAYAS)

Revilla, who came with lifelong actor Philip Salvador, was mobbed by the crowd as the CCSC. At least 20,000 spectators came.

Administration senatorial candidates Bro Langer and Press Secretary Cerge Remonde were at the sports center as early as 8 a.m.

Actor Cesar Montano, a candidate for governor in Bohol, was in one of the floats in the grand parade that kicked off at 1 p.m.

Other movie and television personalities were present to promote their shows and soap operas.

Actor Richard Gutierrez and other GMA-7 stars including the GMA 7 float, with fans shrieking and waving their hands as the float passed by.

Actress and host Valerie Concepcion was in the front of a producer's float promoting.

Actors Eddie Garcia and Pilita Corrales were seen traveling with the crowd. They did not cause commotion, but some fans had their pictures taken with them.

Lucy Torres and Claudine Barretto marched in front of the sports center's grandstand and later boarded a float.

But the biggest disruption was the heavy downpour at 3 p.m., which prompted the organizers to suspend for several minutes the performances at the sports center.

Foster paused in as early as 9 a.m. but this did not deter the dancers from various contingents to line up at their designated areas for the carousel parade.

Ricky Balbuena, executive director of the Sinulog Foundation, said the presence of politicians and show business personalities had been a crowd sight during the 20 years of the festival.

It just took a special significance yesterday because it is election period, but Balbuena said it was "okay" since politicians were not allowed to give speeches.

Some political banners hanging along the parade route were removed, he said.

Chief Supt. Leni-O Sicat, chief of regional police, described the Sinulog festival as "very successful," although several persons were victimized by pickpockets. Some pickpockets were arrested, he said.

If the crowd during the solemn procession on Saturday reached 2 million, Sicat said the grand parade was estimated by an enthusiastic 8 million people.

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Checkpoints delay protest caravan

LUCENA CITY—THE PHILIPPINE Lakbayan ng Anakpawis para sa Lupa at Kalayaan caravan is being delayed by frequent stops at military and police checkpoints along the Maharlika Highway, the spokesperson of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said on Sunday.

"We passed through a lot of checkpoints from the time we started the caravan in Mindoro. And we expect more along the Maharlika Highway where are the Quezon province. The frequent stops and unwarranted inspection along the route have been causing delays to our timetable," Roy Morilla, KMP information officer, told the Inquirer over the phone.

The 38-vehicle protest caravan left Naga City Sunday morning for the next leg of the mobile campaign in Lucena City.

"Our scheduled time of arrival in Lucena on Sunday afternoon has been moved in the evening due to the repeated stops in several checkpoints. These stoppages to check points were all harassment and only aim to delay our arrival to Manila for the Morielda protest rally. But they weren't successful," Morilla said.

Morilla said the more than 800 protesters were all in "high spirits."

"The lunch was prepared by farmers from Comarines Norte," he said.

He said the caravan was met by Southern Tagalog peasants in the boundary of Quezon and Bicol.

Quoting reports from KMP secretary general Danilo Ramos, Gerry Gregoa, Lakbayan information officer, said that since day one of the caravan, rubish linked off in Davao City and Cagayan de Oro City, the convoy of vehicles were frequently stopped in police and military checkpoints.

"Their vehicles were searched and checked by firearms-carrying policemen and government troops as if the farmers are carrying high-powered rifles and explosives with them," Gregoa said over the phone.

He said the caravan was reinforced a week ahead of the rebellion and the police and the military were all informed about the legal and legitimate activity of the farmers.

"Still, the protesting farmers experienced harassment through illegal search of the vehicles at military checkpoints mostly manned by the Philippine Army and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Units) men," Gregoa said.

He assailed the recent decision of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) exempting the paramilitary group from the nationwide gun ban.

He urged Comelec to disband paramilitary groups for its role in long-running violations of human rights.

The members will meet with their colleagues from northern and Central Luzon on Jan. 11 in Manila for a grand protest march to Malacañang to dramatize their call for land reform and justice.

Aside from their demand for the fulfillment of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program, the members will also mark the 23rd year of the Morielda massacre.

At least 13 farmers were killed when they were shot at by members of the army during a rally in 1987.

According to KMP records, 761 farmers have fallen victims to extra-judicial killings, or more than half of those to a thousand victims monitored by the human rights group Karapatan since President Macapagal-Arroyo took power in 2001.

Of those killed, 159 were KMP members and leaders. Emille T. Mirol, Jiel Uy, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Jumbo Performance, Friendly Price

Gunmen ransack Masbate candidate's house

MASBATE CITY—SUSPECTED ARMED men of a private army allegedly ransacked on Saturday morning the house of an aspiring vice mayor in Claveria, Masbate, an Army official said Sunday.

The town of Claveria lies in Ticao Island.

Maj. Harold Cabunoc, public information officer of the 9th Infantry Battalion based in Camp Elias Angeles in Pili, Camarines Sur, said that at 6 a.m., about 30 unidentified armed men broke into the house of a certain Mondeling Badon in Barangay Bagalibi.

Cabunoc said the armed men took away two rifles—a 5.56-mm Bushmaster M-4 and an M-653.

"The armed men then withdrew in an undisclosed location," Cabunoc said.

The armed men were allegedly wearing camouflage uniforms without insignias.

"The barangay residents were able to identify some [members] of the group and said they were members of a previous armed group of a certain politician, who they would not mention," Cabunoc told the reporter.

The Commission on Elections (Comelec) has identified Masbate as an election hot spot.

Last week, 80 Army soldiers were deployed to the province to assist the Comelec in ensuring orderly and honest elections.

The soldiers were also tasked to help dismantle private armies. Artemio Celso Soliva, Inquirer Southern Luzon

APPEAL TO THE LEADERS

How many more deaths?
How many more burned, disfigured and maimed victims?
How many more homes razed to the ground and communities wiped out?
How many more tragedies before consumers are protected from unsafe gas cylinders – ticking time bombs about to blow up in their homes?

Living proof of abuses and illegal acts committed by unscrupulous elements in the liquefied petroleum gas industry

THE FEDERATED LPG DEALERS ASSOCIATION URGES THE SENATE TO APPROVE SB 3418

The Federated LPG Dealers Association (FLPGDA) supports unequivocally the enactment of Senate Bill 3418 into law.

We appeal to the 23 members of the Chamber to expeditiously pass the measure. By doing so, the honorable senators will provide the framework to reform the system governing the LPG industry and upgrade its standards for the benefit of millions of consumers.

In the discussions on the bill in both chambers of Congress, we have shown the dangers posed by the continuing circulation of 3 million LPG cylinders that are corroded and the 3 million other cylinders that need to undergo repair and requalification. The industry reached this unsafe level precisely because of the absence of a law that regulates the industry.

Detractors oppose the bill because it would stop their lucrative business of unlicensed use of branded cylinders without any accountability and guarantee of their safety. They have, for years, profited immensely at the expense of consumer safety and the legitimate players like us who conform not only to our local product and cylinder standards but also to global safety standards.

Millions of households face the risk of losing life, limb and property 24/7 with the use of cylinders for which no one is accountable or responsible.

FLPGDA believes that the sooner SB 3418 is enacted into law, the sooner we can protect consumers and prevent tragedies.

Contrary to the scare tactics being peddled against it, the Senate Bill will serve the genuine desire of our honorable senators to provide a level playing field for all industry players since everyone will have to conform to the same safety standards. Horror stories about shortages and unemployment are totally baseless for they defy basic economics. Besides, they pale in comparison with the horror stories told by victims and survivors of tragedies caused by exploding LPG cylinders.) Best practices in any industry in fact invite more investment and reliability of production/import-distribution-consumption network.

FLPGDA stands for the development of a vibrant and responsible industry. It believes in doing business in the spirit of service to the consuming public, and would like to encourage all the players to do the same. This is attainable for all the players only if the Senate Bill is immediately passed to progressively eradicate deadly LPG cylinders and non-compliant practices.

The Association shall comply with the provisions of SB 3418 should the honorable senators pass this into law. Our member associations, with their nationwide network of distributors and retailers, will support any information campaign to be undertaken by the various government agencies involved to ensure the proper implementation of the law and the attainment of its objectives across all brands throughout the country.

FLPGDA stands behind the Senate in its concern for the safety of millions of LPG consumers.

WE APPEAL FOR THE IMMEDIATE PASSAGE OF SB 3418

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GASUL DEALERS ASSOCIATION, INC. OFFICERS

PETRONAS DEALERS ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

SHELLANE DEALERS ASSOCIATION BOARD PERS AND OFFICERS

TOTALGAZ DEALERS' ASSOCIATION OFFICERS

LIST OF GASUL DEALERS

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This ad was paid for by the million-strong members of the FLPGDA and their immediate families

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Joy, anxiety hit villagers with relatives in Haiti

By Ana Liza Roque
Inquirer Central Luzon

CABANATUAN CITY—TWO CONTRASTING moods prevail in a village in San Leonardo town as five citizens of his community try to grip the earthquake-devastated Haiti.

One is extreme happiness, the other great anxiety.

The village is Mambangan in San Leonardo, 21 kilometers south of here, where the families of Cpl. Ferdi Cabaraso and Sgt. Raimundo Bermudez Jr., both members of the Philippine contingent to the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Haiti, reside.

Both prominently figure in the elections in Haiti.

Using his cell phone, Cpl. Cabaraso guided rescuers and were saved Thursday from the rubble of a collapsed hotel in Port-au-Prince. Bermudez is still trapped in another collapsed hotel.

Despite his bruises and contusions he suffered when Hotel Montana collapsed, Cabaraso had joined his fellow Filipino peacekeepers in the rescue of survivors trapped in the debris of the hotel and have cited as a big help in getting survivors.

"It was a courageous act. Despite his wounds, he readily offered his help in saving other earthquake victims (in Haiti)," said Col. Ramon Olivarez, spokesperson of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Cabaraso's father, Ignacio, 60, said he was both happy and proud about his son's contributions to the rescue efforts.

"I am very proud of him. The virtue of helpfulness to others which I inculcated to him is being established," Ignacio said by telephone.

"I haven't talked with him since the tragedy occurred but from news that I watched and hanging to hear his voice," he said.

His son was a member of the 16th band of the Army Special Operations Command (Scout) based in Camp Magsaysay in Palayan City before he joined the UN peacekeeping forces in Haiti last April. He has five other brothers, one of whom is also a become member of the...He is married with two children.

"He is lucky. It was the second time that he was buried in the rubble of a building downed by an earthquake," he added.

Cabaraso was with Bermudez when the seven-story Caribbean College of the Philippines building here collapsed on July 26, 1990, when a 7.7 magnitude earthquake struck Northern Luzon. About 130 students and teachers died in that collapsed building.

Anxiety descended on Bermudez's household from 1 p.m. from that of the Cabaraso's. No word on the fate of Bermudez, who was trapped in the rubble of the collapsed Christopher Hotel in Haiti, has been received by his family.

Bermudez's wife, Ruby Jean, said she was optimistic her husband would survive. "We had the blessing and the strong will to survive. He can do it," she said.

"My heart and mind tell me that he is alive and that he will be rescued," she said.

She is holding on to Bermudez's promise that they would jointly celebrate their tenth anniversary when he comes home either last week of February or early March, she said.

Bermudez, his wife said has another, Raven, to Cabaraso Bermudez, have the same birthdate, July 3. Bermudez is turning 39, Ruby Jean 30, and his mother in her early 60s.

Ruby Jean said she last talked with her husband on Jan. 12, a day before the earthquake struck. She said he told her he had an exercise brought his family for fun, their daughter, his mother, four sisters and seven relatives.

In Zaragosa City, the mother of Mary Ferry Officer 3 Nicely Pamangal sisters are worry, good or bad, about her daughter.

"Whatever it is, as long as there's a nurse," Melanie, the mother, told the reporter.

Nicely is one of three Filipino peacekeepers believed trapped inside the collapsed Christopher Hotel.

"I believe my daughter is still alive. She's the type of person who doesn't give up that easily," Melanie said.

Nicely, the said, persuasive person knew.

With a report from Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

NEWSBRIEFS

■ ZAMBOANGA CITY

12 hurt in bus attack

TWELVE PEOPLE were wounded when unidentified men fired on a Pagadian City-bound bus in Barangay Lourdes on Saturday night.

Acting city police chief Sr. Supt. Edwin de Ocampo said five of the victims in the 8:15 p.m. attack were in serious condition.

De Ocampo said not politics or business was if suspected in the incident. Godine Dalisdis, was crossing by motorbike in Ipilitoma in Zamboanga Sibugay. "It's unclear motive," he said.

Upon inspection, the bullets used in the attack was 45-caliber.

"All the battery but that's not positive of the bus. Extortionist was of the motives here," he said.

Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

■ LAGUNA

25 nabbed in raid

AT LEAST 25 people were arrested in an operation conducted against illegal drugs in different towns in Laguna on Friday, a police official said.

The 25 were arrested after police officers had received reports believed to be selling shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) in Barangay Cuenca, said Sr. Insp. Marcelito Lobrido, provincial police director.

He said the police recovered 100 grams of suspected shabu with a street value of P200,000, 25 grams of marijuana worth P5,000, and less 38-cal. pistols.

Alexis Romero
Inquirer Southern Luzon

Tremor in S. Luzon

AN EARTHQUAKE with a magnitude of 5 jolted areas in Southern Luzon before dawn on Sunday. The Calabarzon Regional Disaster Coordinating Council (RDCC) said.

The epicenter was recorded in Batangas.

It was felt at magnitude 2 in Puerto Galera in Mindoro Occidental around 3:00 a.m. Calabarzon RDCC director Nicanor Faeldon said by phone. "But it was too deep, could not even feel it," he said.

There was no immediate report on casualties.

Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

Clergy meeting

ABOUT 7,000 Catholic clergy and bishops all over the country are expected to gather at the World Trade Center in Pasay City for the second National Congress of the Clergy on Jan. 25-28.

Some 100 Catholic priests and bishops were those of the Diocese of San Pablo in Laguna who broke away.

San Pablo Bishop Leo M. Drona canceled the monthly recollection and meeting of the San Pablo Clergy on Jan. 18 to give Laguna priests time to prepare for the historic event that would be one of the biggest gathering of the clergy during the past decades to be held.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

■ ANGELES CITY

Institute inaugurated

CHINESE OFFICIALS on Friday inaugurated the Confucius Institute (CI) at the Angeles University Foundation (AUF) here with President Mao Zedong on hand as guest of honor.

Emmanuel Angeles, Commission on Higher Education chair, said the CI would be the 2nd Confucius school on Chinese officials have helped locate villages the establishment.

Lawyer Joseph Estrada, president of the AUF, said the university and the Chinese will promote Chinese language and culture and strengthen interactive activities with contemporary China. He said the AUF is now offering Chinese language courses since last year.

Charlene Cayabyab,
Inquirer Central Luzon

■ BONAO CITY

Village chair suspended

THE PROVINCIAL of the Cagayan Regional Assembly in Pinabacdao town in Capiz has been suspended for 30 days by the mayor for beating a village kid last year.

Mayor Gabriel Jose Corderos ordered out the suspension to Marcos Bacosing, president of the town's association of barangay councils. The suspension is executed in office, and absence of authority.

Bacosing is the barangay chair of Brgy. Pinabacdao, and the only elected federation's vice president.

Bacosing said he would not take the suspension order. He said he would file appeal and that he charges against the mayor.

Gabriel Calleo,
Inquirer Visayas

Albay creates task force to fight El Niño

LEGAZPI CITY—If it going to be one hell year for Albay officials.

The Provincial Disaster Coordinating Council on Wednesday created a task force to prepare for the effects of the El Niño phenomenon which usually brings dry spell.

The Albay El Niño Task Force was tasked with overseeing the implementation of response strategies to curb the impact of the climate change phenomenon.

Gov. Joey Salceda, PDCC chair, said the task force was part of a strategy to cushion the negative effects of the dry spell through the province was not on the list of areas to be affected by El Niño.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration recently confirmed that the El Niño had entered the country's threshold, affecting three local provinces in the first half of the year.

According to its advisory, Camarines Sur, Camarines Norte and Sorsogon are among the 23 provinces that could be affected by the dry spell.

Low rainfall level

Albay cannot afford to be complacent, considering that we experienced a six-month low rainfall level last year and we are at the middle of El Niño areas," Salceda said.

He released an initial fund of P1.5 million for the operation of the task force, composed of the Provincial Agricultural Services Office, Provincial Health Office, Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office (Apsemo), Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office, Department of Trade and Industry, League of Municipalities, and the National Irrigation Administration.

The Apsemo will serve as the task force's secretariat.

THIS PARCHED rice farm in Guinobatan is a reminder that the long and hot dry season is here. ALVIN BALBUENA/INTERNET CLICK

Initial measures to mitigate the effects of the dry spell on the community that the task force include water conservation, cloud seeding so to have rainfall utilization of underground water, use of shallow reservoir and feed security.

It will develop a small-scale irrigation system with a short pestilent period, as well as hunting the rehabilitation of irrigated and commercial irrigation systems.

The task force, which is also chaired by farmers, will formulate and implement measures designed to increase crop production, optimize area productivity, decrease water duty and diversify cropping.

Ahmad Kangina, Center for Initiatives and Research on Climate Adaptation (Circa) executive director, explained that the El Niño/Southern Oscillation (Enso) is a recurrent ocean-warming and atmospheric disturbance resulting in deficient rainfall or prolonged drought in some areas and heavy rain, storms and typhoons in other areas of the globe.

Frequency

El Niño usually appears every two to seven years.

During the past 40 years, the episode record that of 1982-83 as the most intense because of the unusual rise/climate anomalies it brought.

Kangina said the adverse effects would be reduced crop yield or productivity and serious damage to livestock; reduced production capacity of industries and loss of jobs; famine due to lack of food, and desertification as a result of rapid soil degradation.

Its social effects include possible outbreaks and epidemics, forest encroachment, dropping out of pupils and students, and out-migration. —Joy M. Hazel, Inquirer Southern Luzon

No colorum vehicles in mall terminals

The Presidential Anti-Colorum/Kotong Task Force (PACKTAF) headed by DOE Senior Undersecretary Roy V. Kyamko, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) led by Chairman Alberto H. Suansing, and the SM Mall Terminal Owner/Operator led by its senior vice president Engr. Antolin V. Paule signed on January 12 a Memorandum of Agreement regulating the operation of mall transport terminals against colorum vehicles.

Excerpts from the MOA are as follows:

1. Mall terminal owner/operator shall secure accreditation whether provisional, temporary or permanent, for public terminal operations or mall areas, from LTFRB, pursuant to MC No. 2008-013 dated June 4, 2008 and other guidelines.
2. The parties recognize the authority of LTFRB over operations of public terminals for public utilities and the reasonable enforcement activity of PACKTAF and other designated enforcers for the public good, as well as the private ownership of malls and the primary responsibility of mall owners in the management of mall public terminals.
3. The Mall Terminal Owner/Operator shall allow enforcers to enter mall/terminal facilities to conduct enforcement activities at reasonable times, especially during the convergence of shoppers and presence of public transport services.
4. The Mall Terminal Owner/Operator shall not allow colorum or non-franchised out of line units to operate inside mall terminals.
5. Enforcers are to coordinate with designated mall managers during the conduct of enforcement activities. However, if enforcement operations are compromised due to unnecessary leakage of schedule, the Parties agree that prior notice may be dispensed with and coordination shall be done on the spot by the team leader with the designated mall manager.
6. This Memorandum of Agreement shall take effect immediately upon signing of the parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereunto affixed their signatures this 12th day of January 2010 at Quezon City, Philippines.

LAND TRANSPORTATION FRANCHISING AND REGULATORY BOARD

By:

HON. ALBERTO H. SUANSING
Chairman

PRESIDENTIAL ANTI-COLORUM/ KOTONG TASK FORCE

ENGR. ROY V. KYAMKO
Head/PACKTAF

SM MALL TERMINAL OWNER/OPERATOR

By:

ENGR. ANTOLIN V. PAULE
SM Vice President

SIGNED IN THE PRESENCE OF:

ATTY. EMMANUEL A. MANEJE, MNSA
Executive Director, LTFRB

BGEN. ALEXANDER U. YAPCHIONG (Ret)
Deputy Head/PACKTAF

THE DEBACLE OF THE PHILIPPINE CYCLING TEAM AT THE 25TH SEAGAMES

We, the undersigned Filipino cyclists, coaches and officials of the national team, denounce in the strongest terms the selfish, unpatriotic acts of Mr. Bambol Tolentino resulting in our disqualification from the 25th Southeast Asian Game in Lao PDR.

We are convinced that Mr. Tolentino swayed the responses of the International Federation to prevent the Philippine cycling team from entering the SEAG competitions and at the same time, he also disregarded the very important request of all member countries of the region to allow us to compete.

We are also resolute that we will not bow to the whims of Mr. Tolentino and swallow the bitter pill of disqualification rather than seek accreditation to his association which is not recognized by the Philippine Olympic Committee.

SIGNED DECEMBER 9, 2009

Alfie Catalan, *2007 SeaGames Gold Medalist*

Joey Garcia, *2007 SeaGames Gold Medist*

Eusebio Quinones, *2007 SeaGames Silver Medalist*

Alvin Benoza, *2007 SeaGames Bronze Medist*

Marties Bitlot, *2007 SeaGames Gold Medalist*

Rolfad Gorantes, *2007 SeaGames Bronze Medist*

Julius Mark Boruo, *2007 SeaGames Bronze Medalist*

Nilo Elayo, *Cross Country Bronze Medalist*

March Moquin Aleonar, *Cross Country Cyclist*

Scott Rams, *Downhill Cyclist*

Jeremy Moore, *Individual Time Trial Cyclist*

Ana Marissa Remegio, *Women Road Race Specialist*

Joselito Santos, *Head Coach*

Arsenio Tado, *Assistant Coach*

Roberto Querimit, *Masseur/Mechanic*

2 ex-justices say GMA can pick SC chief

From page A1

On the eve of the JBC meeting, Lib. ral Party presidential candidate Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III stood his ground and said he would not apologize for anything other than he would not recognize Ms Arroyo's appointed Chief Justice, assuming he won the May presidential election.

The JBC is supposed to deliberate on whether to start the nomination process tomorrow, Monday.

In their position papers, retired Associate Justices Jose Melencio and Leonardo Vitasco-Santiago both said there was no rule banning the JBC from starting the nomination process months before a presidential election. The ban will run until the presidential term expires on June 30.

There have also been calls for the JBC to forgo the nomination process until the new administration is sworn in on office.

JBC can nominate

Melencio and Santiago said that even if the JBC decided to forego the screening process for Chief Justice, Ms Arroyo could still appoint Puno's replacement in accordance with constitutional provisions.

They also said there was no rule that would prevent the JBC from submitting its list of nominees from which Ms Arroyo would make her choice.

Bellosillo, a 12-year JBC veteran, said Ms Arroyo was mandated under the Constitution to appoint a new Chief Justice within 90 days from the occurrence of a vacancy.

"[The] general rule requiring the President to appoint only from the list submitted by the JBC cannot and should not stop the President from complying with her constitutional mandate, if the JBC does not submit to her on time," Bellosillo said.

"[Otherwise], the JBC can stop the President from complying with her mandate," he said.

Noynoy digs in

Santiago said the constitutional ban "to my mind, does not apply to appointments of Chief Justices."

"It must be remembered that it is the Supreme Court en banc which shall be the sole judge of all contests relating to the election returns, and qualifications of the President or Vice President," Santiago said.

Separately, the Chief Justice-again plays a very crucial and critical role. If during ordinary times, the Chief Justice is appointed right away, with more reason should he be appointed immediately during election period," she said.

But Aquino was firm in his position.

Citing the Constitution, Aquino said that "two months immediately before the next presidential election and up to the end of his term, a presidential or acting presidents shall not make any appointments."

"There is no doubt that [those] in Malacañang would still want to make their last minute move," he said in Filipino.

"They are the think facial. They want to weaken the Commission, and even they want to co-opt[ate]. That seems to be wrong," Aquino said before lead Liberal Party candidates and supporters at the University of Perpetual Help System in Biñan, Laguna, on Saturday.

Malacañang sought to ease the pressure on the JBC on the eve of its meeting on Monday.

"We should leave the JBC alone," Cabinet Secretary Silvestre Bello III said. With reports from Philip C. Tubeza and Christine U. Figueroa

Rescuers race against time

From page A1

ordinary said yesterday.

A total of six Filipinos remain unaccounted for five days after a 7.0-magnitude earthquake devastated Port-au-Prince and other areas in the impoverished Caribbean nation of about nine million people. (See related story in Aurora the Nation, Page A20.)

"This could be a sign that survivors trapped in the building are getting weaker, but we seldom are doing their best and we are still hopeful that we could get them in time," Lt. Col. Ramon Rosario Jr. said, referring to those trapped in the hotel.

"Even as heavy-lucks equipment arrived in Haiti, our Filipino troops continue helping in the rescue operations in any way they can, like lifting debris with their bare hands," Rosario said in a phone interview with the Philippine Embassy in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, which also accredited the peacekeeping contingent in Port-au-Prince, the Haitian capital.

About 100 other Filipinos living in the suburbs of Port-au-Prince are safe, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said, citing a report from the Philippine contingent commander, Lt. Col. Lope Dagoy.

Hotel, supermarket crumble

Three Filipinos trapped in the collapsed Christopher hotel were among members of the Operation Hope search team in August last year.

They were identified as Jerry Feely Dill, 37 Pearly Pamungo, 35, Jaime Aroseta and Sgt. Eduardo Bermudez, who worked as clerks in three of the various UN offices on the second floor of the five-story hotel.

A fourth Filipino, Jerome Vog, a UN civilian staffmember, is also believed trapped in the hotel's basement.

Two other Filipinos have yet to be found. They are Grace Fabini and Geraldine Labrador, who were caught by the earthquake in the four-story Caribbean Supermarket in Port-au-Prince, which also collapsed.

US helping in search

A 45-member team from the United States is helping in search and rescue at the supermarket. The Philippine peacekeeping contingent asked for US help after tapping and other indications of life were heard from the ruins of the supermarket.

"There is no message on the status of the three soldiers trapped in the rubble of the hotel," Dagoy said in an e-mail to the AFP Peacekeeping Operations Center in Cajitas.

Dagoy said Filipino soldiers continued to provide manpower and transport assistance in rescue and retrieval operations.

Focus of rescue

The focus of overall rescue operations was on Christopher Hotel and Hotel Montana, which was also being used as an office by the United Nations, Dagoy said.

He said Filipino peacekeepers were likewise conducting patrols in the vicinity of the collapsed supermarket "upon the request of concerned people" to prevent looting.

Rumors said Haitians were relying on Filipino soldiers to secure their property after the massive earthquake victims began looting for food, water and other basic needs.

Internet linkup

Internet said Internet connection had resumed in Haiti and that the AFP was expanding some access to Filipino foreign affairs officials in the quake. Dagoy had been sending information through a satellite phone.

"We've established Internet connection but still through satellite and we can report continuous flow of information from our troops there through Yahoo messenger chat or Skype or e-mail," Brawner said.

The DFA said about 100 Filipinos living in the communes of Delmas in the Haitian government had been reached by rescue and relief teams and given assistance.

Delmas is part of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan district, which includes the Port-au-Prince city proper. Haiti is divided into 10 departments (administrative departments), including Cuvea.

Music cafe

Among those accounted for were members the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary who were identified only as Sherrie and Indira.

Community members, whether Filipinos or Haitians, were given rice, sugar, oatmeal and coffee, the DFA said.

It said relief items had also reached the group of Holy Ten Chien and Cherry Hechanova, who earlier reported sentences due to peace and order concerns in their area.

The DFA said the Philippine honorary consul, Fitzgerald Bussik, survived the quake.

Diplomats killed

Eighteen bodies have been retrieved from the collapsed UN headquarters in Christopher Hotel, including those of minister head Hedi Annabi, his deputy Luiz Carlos and Director Solibanodio in Haiti Hedie Wang.

Extensive efforts to rescue other officials, personnel and affiliated technicians who are still unaccounted for are continuing, the DFA said.

The names of the Filipino community members in the Delmas commune may be seen on the DFA website (www.dfa.gov.ph).

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ROBINSONS BDO

Draft Senate report seeks Villar censure

Front page A1

The report was released before Congress took its holiday break last month to spare the significant of members. It awaits the signature of the majority of senators or 12 for it to be reported out in the plenary.

Villar, the presidential candidate of the Nacionalista Party, was investigated by the committee on how her pet coco-levy utilization fund for was behind the double funding of the P300-million extension project in the 2008 national budget and the diversion of the road to serve board? In her real estate business.

The report said Villar violated Section 14, Article VI, of the Constitution by failing to notify the Senate of a "potential conflict of interest" when he proposed an amendment to the 2008 national budget by appropriating P600 million ... for a project that would benefit his corporations and which interest may be need to pay the claims of his corporations for unpaid land right-of-way compensation."

Other findings of the report:

• Villar was the proponent of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Link Road Project and the DPWH C-5 extension project which were made to pass through the properties of his corporations "following a curved, instead of a straight alignment."

• The alignment of the C-5 segment of the Manila-Cavite Toll Expressway Project of the Toll Regulatory Board was changed to accommodate the Villar-owned property.

• The properties of Villar's corporations that were acquired for the Las Piñas-Parañaque link project and the C-5 extension project were given zonal valuations five different areas (not the zonal valuation of the same relevant lots were located, inching up the compensations for them.

VILLAR

tion by Villar to the public coffers for the money or pecuniary advantage "in fact or by computation have illegally gained or obtained as a result of unlawful acts and improper and unethical conduct."

Failure to notify Senate

It said the senator violated the conflict-of-interest rule by not divesting himself of his interests in Adelfa Properties, Golden Haven Memorial Park and Ayala Land Estate Corp. (now Bonifacio Corp.) when it was apparent to him that these corporations had a contract with the DPWH for right-of-way acquisition.

The report said Villar was a substantial stockholder of Adelfa Properties, which owns Golden Haven Memorial Park and Ayalaland Estate Corp. and other properties benefited from right-of-way payments from the diversion of the road project. The companies still have unpaid claims.

It said Villar violated Section 12, Article VI, of the Constitution by failing to notify the Senate of a "potential conflict of interest" when he proposed an amendment to the 2008 national budget by appropriating P600 million ... for a project that would benefit his corporations and which interest may be need to pay the claims of his corporations for unpaid land right-of-way compensation."

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Not direct participation

But the report said there was no evidence that Villar had directly participated in the overpricing of the properties.

It said it was safe to assume that Villar knew about the overpricing because his corporations stood to gain from the transactions and because of his closeness to Asuncion Adriano Jr., an official of Adelfa Properties, who was directly involved in the transactions.

The report added that Villar had allowed Adriano to propose an unsolicited to the 2008 national budget, the appropriation of P600 million for the C-5 road project, when there was no specific projects of work by the project and despite the fact that the Villar study no allocation for the project.

The only apparent reason for the amendment was to make available an appropriation for the payment of right-of-way acquisition claims of about P200 million, according to the report.

"As admitted by Adriano, it was in the interest of the corporations of Senator Villar to be paid for such road right of way," the report said.

It said this "interest may be supposed to or affected by the faithful performance of official duty as the part of Senator Villar who has the power to appropriate public funds ... by inserting amendments to the national budget."

The report said Villar used that power to satisfy the interest of his corporations, violating the conflict-of-interest rule and Section 14, Article VI, of the Constitution.

Noting that Villar had proposed the C-5 extension project when he was still a member of the House of Representatives, the report said he "continued to fund" the project when he was already a senator and yet did not disclose his pecuniary interest as required by the Constitution.

It said Villar headed the two projects' changeable "against various inducements, including local projects" as against the Priority Development Assistance Fund (pork barrel of lawmakers) from 2001 to 2008.

IN THE KNOW

IT IS A PUNISHABLE OFFENSE UN Sept. 6, 2005, Sen. Panfilo Lacson said the construction of a stretch of road from the Southern Expressway to Sucat Road in Parañaque City was a "colossal waste" in the 2006 General Appropriations Act.

The P206-million budget matters "Presidential Garden Gazebo Restoration" and "2-Flood Extension" refer to the construction, Lacson said.

Sen. Manny Villar admitted that he was the one who had requested more funds for the project, but stressed that he "did not and will not get anything from the additional funding."

Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile confirmed that Villar had asked him to insert P206 million for the C-5 project, but said there was an error in requesting involved as the request was only meant to oversee the speedy completion of the project.

On Oct. 9, 2008, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile filed an ethics complaint against Villar. On April 14, 2009, the Senate ethics committee found the Malolos congressman sufficient in form and substance.

Sen. Alan Peter Cayetano accused the committee of a "whitewash cover-up" saying that it signed the order before it held a meeting to decide whether or not the complaint was adequate.

The Senate panel that was formerly opened on May 14, 2009. Aside from the doubleburden issue, Biddygirl's camp accused Villar of violating the C-5 project is he diverted to pass through properties owned by his corporations.

On May 21, members voted

It's nothing but a piece of paper, says Cayetano

Front page A1

in the media when it was not an official document.

Questionable timing

He said the release of the report at this time was questionable.

Cayetano said it came at a time "when the survey period is coming out."

"The report was released when the members of [sen. Benigno Aquino III and Senator Villar are close," he said. Villar is trailing Aquino but has cut the latter's lead.

For the report to be perused, or in the plenary, it will require the signatures of 12 senators. Enrile said core difficulties. Otherwise, he said, there will be no report on the [unethical conduct by and financial gains of Villar in connection with the C-5 road extension project].

"But it will be part of the records of the Senate," the Senate president told ABS-CBN. "If someone wants a copy, he could make a formal request."

Enrile shrugged off a Senate resolution filed in November last year that one 12 senators saying that Villar was innocent of the charges filed against him by Sen. Juan Consuelo Ponce Enrile.

Enrile asked why senators signed the resolution when the committee report had not yet been released.

He had the committee report circulated for signature when Congress took its holiday break in December last year.

Quake Day 5: Aid arrives but stalls in Haiti chaos

Front page A1

Sometimes, Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive told The Associated Press.

The Pan American Health Organization estimates 30,000 to 100,000 people perished in the quake. Bellerive said 100,000 would "seem to be the minimum."

Those figures, however, could soar once the full extent of the tragedy is known. Early estimates had spoken of as many as 300,000 dead.

Fate of towns unclear

The fate of whole towns and villages around the capital also remained unclear.

The dozen-strong, for instance, based on Saturday in the town of Leogane, just 17 kilometers west of Port-au-Prince, was struggling—amid piles of bodies and businesses torn apart.

"It's the eye epicenter of the earthquake, and many, many thousands are dead," World Food Program spokesperson David Orr said on Saturday.

"Ready-cover house was destroyed here. The military is talking about 20,000 to 30,000 dead," he said.

Worst disaster

A UN humanitarian spokesperson declared the quake the worst disaster the relief and organization has seen—a brutal choice as much government and UN capacity in the country was demolished.

In that way, the third earthquake in recent time that the international community would further compound its challenges.

An unwritten team, however, pulled a woman alive from a collapsed university building where she had been trapped for 97 hours. Another crew got survivors to their survivors whose throats could be heard deep in the panicked ruins of a multi-story supermarket.

Bittersweet rescue

At the Hotel Montana, the site of many Rodney Carrybee could be could hear his mother's voice from the rubble, and his effort to pull her to safety began.

Twelve hours later, with more than 20 friends and relatives at the [unintelligible] community member something early Sunday she was rescued from a hill of debris on a stretcher.

Aid delivery

The rescue was bittersweet for Carrybee's sister because rescuers also told Gertha Carrybee they had abandoned a search for her 7-year-old grandson after an aftershocks shared a space where he was believed to be.

"Well, we can't have them

HOT FOR HAITI: Serena Williams of the United States and Roger Federer of Switzerland greet each other during the fund-raising exhibition "We for Haiti" ahead of the Australian Open tennis tournament in Melbourne. AFP/FILE

points for food and other supplies, and US Army helicopters escorted locations for more.

Aid groups opened five emergency health centers in Port-au-Prince, such as water purification units, was arriving from abroad.

On a hillside golf course, an estimated 50,000 people were sleeping in a makeshift tent city overlooking the stricken capital. Emergency workers of the UK-based Aid to Doctors Hospital on Saturday to set up a base for handing out water and food.

Machetes brandished

An Agence France Presse journalist witnessed a UN helicopter dropping a load of food to small canvas bags, a number of starving Haitians, some brandishing machetes so they fought for the items.

After the initial frenzy among the starving crowd when bulk supplies arrive, a number of people could only leave and return out of their camps, a security flight landed and additional ground soldiers arrived to ease unrest as an orderly line of Haitians.

But aid delivery was still bogged down by congestion at the Port-au-Prince airport, under damage at the airport, poor roads and the fear of looters and robbers.

The airport congestion—the touchiest of diplomatic convolutions between the US military and other donor nations.

France and Brazil both landed official complaints that the US military, in control of the international airport, had denied landing permission to relief flights from their countries.

Haitian President René Préval urged everyone all to "keep our cool and exercise restraint in the face of adversity."

Exodus to countryside

"Many people are just fleeing to the countryside, they are looking for a place to stay and for food," said Ethel Legrand, a 24-year-old Haitian volunteer aid worker.

The United Nations said in a statement Sunday that Haitians were trying to cross the border into the Dominican Republic to the east, and reported a surge of quake survivors fleeing to northern cities.

Crammed onto overflowing buses or on foot, thousands fled the shattered capital where the stench of decomposing bodies hung in the air and huge piles of empty cots.

"The streets smell of death," said Tabalum Saint Fils, who said his family fled the quake-hit city to escape the stench.

"I'd get on any place but every [bus] city," she said. "There is no assistance of any kind, and our children simply cannot live like animals."

US to step up help

As relief teams grappled with obstacles on the ground, the US leadership promised on Saturday to step up aid efforts. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton visited Haiti and pledged more American assistance.

President Barack Obama met with former Presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton in Washington and urged Americans to donate to Haiti relief efforts.

In Port-au-Prince, hundreds of Haitians simply escaped to their homes to see to needs or to search for their loved ones.

Children and the elderly were seized to stay their ties but, and some 3,500 people got food, soap and rubber sandals and supplies on one, he said. Reports from AP and Reuters

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DID YOU KNOW

THE SPANIARDS built Fort Santiago in the same area where the fort of Rajah Sulayman's town used to stand. The Governor's Palace was also erected on the site of Rajah Sulayman's house. *Cyril C. Jovellanos, Inquirer Research*

Baseco fire kills 1, hurts 3

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A 5-YEAR-OLD GIRL DIED while three people were injured when a fire razed some 500 shanties and left 800 families homeless in Manila on Saturday night.

The body of Erica Joy Nikki was found in the still smoking ruins of her house at 139 Block 1 Umangan Area in the Baseco Compound, Port Area, more than two hours after the fire was put out by responding firefighters of the Manila Fire District.

On the other hand, Arnie Linda, 37; Ruben Dimalo, 24; and Reshan Dabbing, 22, suffered minor burns while trying to retrieve some of their possessions from their burning houses.

Arson investigator SPO2 Emmanuel Gaspar told the Inquirer that Nikki's body was found lying underneath a pile of burnt steel tiles by scavengers who were looking for reusable materials on account of new typhoon.

Gaspar said the girl was initially reported missing by her mother, Adel, who told firemen that she forgot all about her daughter when she fled from their house at the height of the fire.

MORE IN A24

FIREMEN examine what's left of a house in Baseco Compound after a fire hit the area, leaving 800 families homeless. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA

Cuerpo back at town hall

By DJ Yap

SUSPENDED MORRISSEY MAYOR PEDRO Cuerpo has gone back to work despite an order for his suspension, issuing memorandums to department heads to this effect and informing bank officials that transactions with the local government should be conducted with him.

Cuerpo insisted that his two-month preventive suspension should be considered void based on a Commission on Elections (Comelec) resolution prohibiting the suspension of elected officials within the election period. He said he is undemocratic to mean that he should be reinstated.

Cuerpo said he wrote Comelec Chair Jose Melo on Friday to clarify the issue but was told to file a petition instead. He said he would file it today.

For the meantime, the suspended mayor said he has set up a temporary office in the annex of the municipal office, since he has been barred from entering his office due to his suspension.

He said some operations at the town hall were being disrupted as a result of the resolution. "Some papers go through him (acting mayor Jesus Cruz), and some papers go through me," Cuerpo said.

He added that the legal departments of banks which were transacting business with the town government had informed him that they would wait for Comelec to draw up the situation first.

MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY

INVITATION TO BID

ASSIGN LANE FOR SLOW-MOVING VEHICLES
Cortes, 45, of Parnaque City writes: "With the start of the new year, please assign a lane for motorcycles, tricycles, pedicabs, bikes and even pedestrians. The drivers of these vehicles are at danger and they cause traffic. They should not be allowed on the innermost lane which is for fast vehicles and for overtaking."

Metro Citizen's call

0918-9985566

Danger ahead

Jeepneys waiting for passengers always block half of the intersection of San Andres and Jose Gotamco streets in Malate, Manila. Now more than ever at night, it's very dangerous for motorists.

Jose M., 32, Malate, Manila

Nonworking traffic light

MMDA or the city government should force change the traffic light at the corner of V. Luna Extension and Aroman Extension in Sikatuna Village. It's been out of order since November. Please do something about it before the one at the intersection of Aroman Road and Kamias be faulty also.

Ani Medina, 39, Fraternity, Quezon City

Wanted: Traffic enforcers

Heavy traffic during morning rush hour on Alabang-Zapote Road (from 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.) from Inocs Alabang to Medical Avenue due to absence of traffic enforcers.

Ben Lim, 49, Las Piñas

Overcharging buses

I usually ride a bus when I go to school. But the last time I rode in one, they charged regular passengers P10 and students, P8.5. I wonder why they charge but more? Has there been a new hike? Or are they just taking advantage of commuters?

Kathleen Cruz, 19, San Jose del Monte, Bulacan

From bad to worse

Traffic in Bonifacio has gone from bad to worse. Vendors are now occupying not just the sidewalks but the streets as well. Pedicabs are everywhere, breaking just about every traffic rule in the city.

Reg, 24, Binondo, Manila

Legal trader cries foul

Motorist going southbound in Alabang Zapote Road (from 6:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.) from Inocs Alabang to Medical Avenue due to absence of traffic enforcers.

Ben Lim, 49, Las Piñas City

Wanted: Traffic enforcers

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Ben Lim, 49, Las Piñas City

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2 dead as car rams steel post

By Nancy C. Carvajal

TWO MEN IN THEIR late 20s who were residents of suburban subdivisions were killed early this morning when their car they rammed at high speed a steel post at the intersection of Temple Drive and Emerjanan Avenue in Quezon City at 12:30 a.m. yesterday.

PO2 Rosario Ilarga of the Quezon City Police District Traffic Enforcer Group identified the fatalities as Christian Guevara, 26, a resident of Loyola Grand Villas in Quezon City, and Marcel Carreon, 28, of La Vista Subdivision, also in Quezon City.

Ilarga said doctors from Medical City, who happened to pass by the crash site declared Carreon, who was seated in the front passenger seat, dead on the spot.

Guevara, who was the driver, was still alive when rescuers arrived, although he was pinned inside the wreckage of the vehicle, a blue Subaru Impreza (UZT 506).

Doctors tried to revive him but he died of his several injuries.

The vehicle, Ilarga said, was a wreck, as it was nearly split in two due to the impact of the crash.

No one has come forward to tell them how the accident happened, he added.

Ilarga said witnesses told the police that they only learned of the accident after they heard a loud crash.

"Based on the damage [sustained by] the vehicle, it seemed the driver was traveling at high speed," he said.

Ilarga added that although the area was known to be a favorite spot of drag racers, "there's no indication the victims were drag racing."

MetroBriefs

Jobless man kills self

A 23-YEAR-OLD jobless man killed himself with a gunshot wound to the head in his room in Barangay Ugong Norte in Quezon City, police said yesterday.

Police identified the victim as Jeffrey Reyes, a resident of Ugong Norte.

Reyes' mother, Jocelyn, found the body of Jeffrey Reyes lying on the floor with a gunshot wound on the head at his house at Dapdap Street, Ugong Norte, at around 8 a.m. yesterday.

Beside the victim's body was a .45 caliber pistol, police said.

Police said that the victim left behind a suicide note, which was found by his mother.

The note, however, was not released to the media.

Police said that the victim had been unemployed for the past two years.

The case is being investigated as a suicide.

Jhoe Calleja

SM PRIME HOLDINGS AND OLONGAPO CITY CONTRACT SIGNING
SM Prime Holdings and the City of Olongapo recently signed an agreement for the long-term lease and redevelopment of the Olongapo City Mall which is located right beside the Subic Bay Freeport Duty-Free Complex. Present during the signing ceremony are (from L to R): Consultant to the City Mayor, Mr. James Gonzalez; SMPHI President, Mr. Hans T. Sy; Olongapo City Mayor Hon. James "Bong" Gordon, Jr., and SMPHI Executive Vice President, Mr. Jeffrey C. Lim.

Baseco ...

Front page 4 (2)

The two were sleeping when the fire broke out at around 9:45 p.m. on Saturday. It reached the bunkhouse before responding firefighters arrived to put it out at 10:22 p.m.

Tongco said the cause of the fire remains under investigation. The estimated cost of damage to property was placed at P2 million.

A BIGGER & BETTER KIA PASIG OPENS

Autocircle, Inc., brings Kia's global expertise and experience to service Pasig City and Metro Manila

Autocircle, Inc., Kia Motors' authorized dealer in Pasig City, recently opened its expanded showroom and service facilities along 1253 Amang Rodriguez Ave. in Pasig to service this emerging industrial and financial center southeast of Manila and bring to its expanding clientele Kia's world-renowned cars, genuine parts, and after-sales service.

The opening of Kia Pasig through Autocircle, Inc., underscores Kia's commitment and resolve to be as close to its customer base as possible, so that car owners in the east and in the northeastern provinces of Metro Manila may also experience and enjoy Kia's brand of sales and service, attributes that have made Kia the fourth largest automaker in the world today.

Columbian Autocar Corporation (COC), Kia's authorized distributor in the Philippines, through its President and COO Otto J. Mahling, Jr., says that Kia Pasig's expanded showroom and service facilities meet the stringent requirement of a full-service Kia Dealership and is considered among the best not only in the Philippines but also in the whole ASEAN region. Kia Pasig is a recipient of numerous Kia awards worldwide including the Platinum Award, and ranked one of the top 3 dealers in the Asia Pacific region in 2007.

"We are winners in the phenomenal rise of Pasig as a stellar financial, industrial and civic center and we like to seize this opportunity to be at the leader of it all," says Mahling. Kia, being a dynamic automotive company itself whose aggressive to global presentation is also striking chair of phenomenal, would certainly welcome such challenge and opportunity to be part of Pasig's growth," he adds.

Kia Pasig's showroom and service center along Amang Rodriguez Avenue is in a strategic location to service areas of Marikina, Cainta, Antipolo and other outlying areas in the eastern part of Metro Manila and Rizal provinces. Its presence in the area boosts Kia's competitiveness in bringing superior and technologically-advanced cars to the part of the country.

Kia Pasig may be reached through telephone numbers 645-3855, 645-9551, 666-4907 and 492-5277.

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The WORLD

Editor Lorenzo B. Gozo

No agreement on new Iran sanctions

NEW YORK—DIPLOMATS FROM six key powers focused on possible new sanctions against Iran over its nuclear program at a meeting here aiming for modest co-agreement.

Rolando Gasper, the Nonproliferation Union's political director who chaired the meeting, said the United States, Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany concluded "that Iran has failed to follow up" on an agreement in principle in October that Tehran exchange uranium for nuclear fuel, "to persuade by refusing further meetings to discuss the nuclear issue."

He said the six nations remain committed to a "dual track" approach to Iran to try to reduce global fears over its nuclear program—diplomatic and political engagement on the one hand and possible new sanctions if Tehran refuses to rein in its nuclear ambitions.

"That implies that we will continue to want a negotiated solution, but consideration of appropriate further measures has also begun," Gasper told reporters after the two-and-a-half-hour closed-door meeting.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said the six powers "transformed our desire" to meet again with the Iranians to discuss their October proposal.

"We have talked mostly today on the second track, but it doesn't mean that we should abandon the first one," he said. "We do believe there is still time for meaningful political engagement, and efforts to find a solution. That's something that Russia has always advocated."

But a senior diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity because the talks were private, said the message was clear from the meeting is that time is running out.

Iran argues that its nuclear program is aimed at meeting a growing nuclear energy network to serve its growing population. The US and other nations believe Iran's nuclear program has the goal of creating atomic weapons.

The US and its Western allies have been pushing for a fourth round of UN sanctions. But only Russia, and especially China, despised of any new sanctions, they have to tread carefully to maintain its power unity on how to deal with Iran.

The senior diplomat said there would be further meetings of the six countries but no date has been set.

Saturday's meeting was supposed to be of political directors—top diplomats in the countries' foreign ministries—but Chinese was only represented by a counselor from its UN mission, Kang Yong, see Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei.

Taking over the rotating presidency of the Security Council in early January, China's UN Ambassador Zhang Yesui said Beijing opposes new sanctions against Iran for now because diplomatic efforts to bridge differences over the country's nuclear program are taking place.

China—which relies on Iran for much of its energy—is a vote-wielding member of the Security Council along with the US, Russia, Britain and France. AP

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Legazpi City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Activities | Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents | January 18-20, 2010, 8:00 AM - 5 PM
2. Pre-Bid Conference | January 20, 2010, 1:00 PM
3. Deadline for Submission of Bids | February 5, 2010, 10:00 AM
4. Opening and Evaluation of Bids | February 5, 2010, 1:00 PM
5. Post-Qualification | February 6, 2010, 10:00 AM

BICOL UNIVERSITY
By: MA. CRISTINA B. ABORDO, Ph.D.
BAC Chairperson

Spanish pol horrified his photo used for Bin Laden poster

MADRID—A SPANISH LAWmaker was horrified to learn that the federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) used an online photograph of him to create an image of terrorist Osama bin Laden might look like today.

The image using Gaspar Llamazares' photo appeared on a wanted poster updating the United States government's 1998 photo of the al-Qaida leader.

FBI spokesman Rex Hoffman acknowledged to the Spanish newspaper El Mundo that the agency used a picture of Llamazares taken from Google Images.

In a statement Saturday, the agency would say only that it was aware of similarities between their age-progressed image and that of an existing photograph of a Spanish public official.

"The forensic artist was unable to find suitable features among the reference photographs and obtained those features, in part, from a photograph he found on the Internet," the FBI said in a statement to The Associated Press.

LLAMAZARES (top photo) said what Bin Laden could look like (inset) now

The wanted poster appeared on the State Department website reward program set, listing a reward of up to $25 million. The FBI said the photo of Bin Laden would be removed from the website.

Llamazares, a former leader of the United Left party, was elected to Spain's parliament in 2000. The photograph of him used to make the wanted poster originally appeared on posters for his 2004 general-election campaign.

He said he would no longer feel safe traveling to the US after his hair and facial variables appeared on the Bin Laden image.

"I was surprised and angered because it's the most clumsy use of a real person to make up the image of a terrorist," Llamazares said. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

JFK terminal in New York evacuated after security breach

NEW YORK—A busy terminal at John F. Kennedy International Airport was evacuated Saturday after a passenger opened a restricted door and set off an alarm, officials said. The incident delayed dozens of flights and caused headaches for hundreds of travelers who had to wait the terminal, wait for police to sweep through the building, and then return for second security screening. The security breach apparently involved a passenger who arrived on a flight from Orlando, Florida, and, while exiting Kennedy's Terminal 8, opened a door that was supposed to be used only by airport workers. AP

US drone attack kills 15 in Pakistan's Waziristan

PESHAWAR, Pakistan—A US drone aircraft fired missiles in Pakistan's South Waziristan region on the Afghan border, killing at least 15 militants on Sunday, Pakistani security officials said. The Taliban claim that the deepest air offensive drone strikes in Pakistan's history since a Dec. 30 suicide bombing killed seven CIA employees at a US base in neighboring Afghanistan. Most of the casualties were foreign fighters, a senior security official said. Reuters

Iraq says it captured man who oversaw UN bombing

BAGHDAD—Iraqi authorities have captured a senior leader of a militant group linked to al-Qaeda in Iraq who oversaw the 2003 bombing of the United Nations headquarters in Baghdad and other attacks, the military said Saturday. The truck bomb that tore through the UN offices on Aug. 19, 2003, killed 22 people, including top envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello. The blast and a subsequent attack days later prompted the global body to temporarily pull out of Iraq. Authorities kept the arrest quiet for more than half a year to ensure the capture of other suspects believed to be linked to him. AP

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SPORTS
Editor Teddyboy S. Molavedra
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SLR plasters Barako Bull

Williams keys Realtors' romp

By Mussey R. Cuello

BELLE WILLIAMS SCORED 11 OF HIS 23 POINTS IN A SECOND-QUARTER breakaway that eventually felled the Barako Bull big man and boosted the Realtors' quarterfinal bid to the AFC-PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

BB A22

BELLE Williams of Sta. Lucia loses control of the ball after barreling into the defense of Barako Bull playmaker Dondon Hontiveros. ANGGE TANCIOCO

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Smart Gilas sniping key vs Jordan

By Jose Mariano

DUBAI—COACH RALPH TOMOMAN HAS SEEN THE JORDAN NATIONAL team humble the opposition many times in the past.

The Serbian mentor and the Smart Gilas Pilipinas national team got the chance to size up the Jordanians up close Monday in the 21st Dubai International Basketball Tournament.

"They have a solid lineup (also three Americans) … imports—you can only imagine what kind of team they are," said Tomoman on the eve of their match against Jazz, which boasts players from the Jordan national squad.

Tomoman said facing the Jordanians, who are in the midst of preparation for the 2010 Fiba World Championship in Turkey, offers valuable lessons which Smart Gilas can use in the future.

Tomoman said it is more likely that it will be the same Jordan team the Filipinos will face in the Asian finishers in November and the 2011 Fiba Asia Championship.

Smart Gilas is gearing up for both tournaments with the Fiba Asia as its main target since the winners then gets to join the 2012 London Olympics.

"I think we can stand a chance against them and be competitive as long as we share well," said Tomoman.

Tomoman, the coaching genius behind Iran's return to the 2008 Beijing Olympics, will also try to end Smart Gilas' back losses by the PBA oldtimers on the Jordanians.

Chot Reyes and his team of PBA stars lost to Jordan in the elimination round of the 2007 Fiba Asia Championship in Tokushima, Japan.

Another PBA-backed team crumbled by Yeng Guiao again lost to Jordan in the 2009 Fiba Asia Championship in Tianjin, China.

Jordan has kept the services of ex-mentor Jamal Mashhour. Said 46-6'Asst, ex-mentor Dato and Rashome Wright, the team's naturalized player who scored 32 points in Zain's 69-60 overtime victory over Al Nasr the other night.

"It's the same team that they hope to bring to the Olympics," said Tomoman after Gilas beat the Pauli El Khoury-led Emirati Champville, 77-71, Friday night for a 1-1 record in Group B.

Murakami tops Asian Tour q'fying

Aunzo, Dumandan, Byron also make the grade

HUA HIN, THAILAND—FILIPINO ARTHEDD MURakami defeated Guido Van Der Velk of the Netherlands in a playoff to win the 2010 Asian Tour Qualifying School Final Stage presented by the Sports Authority of Thailand on Saturday.

Murakami and Van Der Velk, who both lost their Asian Tour cards last season, returned to the 15th hole after living a final round 70 and 68, respectively, to end up level at 12-under par 276 to regulation play at the Springfield Royal Country Club.

The duo birdied the first playoff hole, but then both found the water on their approach shots on the second. Van Der Velk failed to recover and lost his fourth shot again into the water.

Murakami's second attempt landed safely on the green and he sank his putt for par and the victory.

"From one angle, the cup was facing directly at us and we could not see where the green was," said Murakami. "It was a really tough shot which both of us failed to make."

Murakami, the 2007 Mandaue Johor Open winner, led 43 players who earned their Tour cards, among them his compatriots Ferdinand Aunzo, Marvin Dumandan and Juvic Pagunsan.

Aunzo closed with a 71 while Dumandan had a 74 to join an eight-way tie for 28th at 285.

Baryon shot a 70 and made the cutoff mark of 289 along with seven others.

ARTHEDD Murakami shows the top graduate's card as winner of the 2010 Asian Tour qualifying school. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Mark Foster, 1093 of England, a one-time European Tour winner, finished third to clinch the 27th alongside overnight leader and two-time Japan Tour winner Kazuhiro Imai (74) of Japan.

Singapore's Quincy Quek finished tied 11th after his round of 74. Thailand's Pel Boonmark was the only Thai who earned his Tour card after signing off with a 73 to finish in tied 24th place.

Panchanan Jose 'Jay Dr' Bible failed in his second attempt after finishing tied for 67th. Jose is Only Music, vying to be the first Hermanovoo to make the grade, also finished outside the top-40. Adam Tour Store

Huelgas big in Speedo triathlon series kickoff

By Jasmine W. Pajo

EMERGING FROM THE MIDST OF ELGAS PLAZA for another leg calling the first leg of the Speedo National Age Group Triathlon Series 2010 yesterday at the Dangwen Beach in Subic.

The 19-year-old Huelgas, recently tapped to join the national developmental pool, clocked two hours, 14 minutes and two seconds in outclass over 130 racers in the grueling 1.5K swim-40K cider-10K marathon.

Canadian expatriate David Swiss cleaned in 11 seconds later in 2:14:33, followed by national triathlete August Brandicio in 2:14:36.

"I was really hoping to do well," said Huelgas, who finished leg example in the duo race.

Huelgas, a member of Ta. Sulit's athletics and swimming varsity teams, also clocked the gold in the 19-year-old age group of the first two sections run by the Triathlon Association of the Philippines this year.

Rhiniel Abad led all female racers with a time of 2:40:37 in the 25 to 29 age group.

Sarena Constance shred 3:04:32 and Sandra Asuncion rained in 3:19:08 to round out the top three finishers in the women's division.

Weiss, who beat Huelgas in the Aseaps Cup Cebu leg last December, however, also topped the 40-44 age class, while Brandicio ruled the 25-29 group.

Other age group winners in the male division were Emmanuel Alberto Rodil in 2:28:5 (age 20-24); Timothy Joseph Isla in 2:03:56 (20-24); Abe Tejay in 2:22:48 (35-39); and Anthony Welch in 2:31:06 (45-49).

Jessica Sabdani, Allen Santiago and Ana Stefania Reid ruled the 12-15 boys' and girls' class, while Angelo Jones and Aurelio Estrajero won the adult division.

Anila Mari Dolores (9:41 out) stays Ivisha Isaac (11:11) topped the kids squeakfest.

MEMBERS of Team R2-Harbour Centre, coached by Mikee Romero (7), celebrate their fourth straight title in the Open division.

BERDELLI CUP

Team R2-Harbour five repeats

TEAM R2-HARBOUR CENTRE KEPT ITS winning tradition in the La Salle alumni Basketball League.

Powered by former PBA player Johnedel Cardel, Team R2-Harbour Centre captured its fourth straight championship with a non-game victory of the San Juan Knights Sports in the Berdelli Cup's Open division recently.

PBA coaches Cuby Garcia and Jorge Gallent and Philippine Patriots team manager Erick Arejola also suited up for the powerhouse squad that has dominated seven of the tournament's last 12 staging.

Other members of the team were Ed Mineles, Mike Dedoloa, Dirk Tolentino, Nino Mendoza, Carlo Franco, Benedict Cojuico, Eli Sandoval, Oliver Luo, Alex Luo, Emil Lim, Jojo Abad, Ed Cua, Jesse Lopez, Gino Perez, JA Cachila and Arwin Agustin.

Team owner Mikee Romero also managed the Harbour Center team that won seven straight PBL titles.

The league is the biggest La Salle alumni basketball tournament. Jasmine W. Pajo

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Richest World Slasher Cup unfolds

A ONE INSTALLMENT OF P25 MILLION—the biggest prize ever in cockfighting history—will be up for grabs in the 2010 World Slasher Cup Derby which first off today at the historic Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

"It could be even bigger," said derby steward Greg Sarmiento of the Philippine Cockers Confederation, adding, he was basing his projections on the record-breaking number of entries for the five-day tournament-derby.

The other derby dates are Jan. 19, 20, 21 and 23.

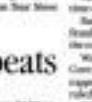
Host Promoter of Champions announced a field of 250 cocker-breeders from around the globe, surpassing last year's listing of 207.

And because the minimum bet is pegged at P10,000 per fight (subject), this year's World Slasher Cup could easily top the P15-million pot money, making it the planet's richest, most prestigious and toughest cockfighting event.

* * *

In last SabongCity's point launch at the Eastwing Suites, the purebred gamefowl was spotlighted. There were fed by cocker-breeders from the United States, Canada, Guyana, Japan, Malaysia, Taiwan, Guam and Australia.

But cocker from host Philippines were also represented as are the 45th edition of sabong has been



CLEAN LIVING

Marnelo R. Milpo

generally considered as "The Olympics of World Cockfighting."

"We have proven to the past that Filipino cocker-breeders are at par with their foreign counterparts," many said they believe who, as a newcomer, surprised cocker-breeder by topping the 2002 World Slasher Cup to a tie with the event-tie Mort Bravata.

He said that local cocker-breeds have been performing better in recent years and that there's no guarantee imported cocks or pure bloodlines will dominate the big derbies here.

* * *

In telling the event in 2000, former cockfight colleague in the Evening Post, named locally bred fighting cocks. Yet he said the pure bloodlines of famous cockers cocks breeders like Greg Gard Hamlik, Ray Alexander and Roger Delores.

Balaoro, a cock-quicker breeder from Atlanta, Georgia, won the 2001 Slasher Cup in partnership with millionaire owner Rene Asuncra.

Other past Slasher winners include: Isidro Sack (Sampaloc Seminole (1999 in a showing with home shells and Andrew Sr. and in 1999 with Pinoys (unrelated); Isidro Silos Enriquez, who paired with Joey Ellard and Jose Sanz; James Donaghuey Antone Pampo (1998); Ray Arcambo/Buddy Bautista (1997); Antonio Castillo, Leonardo Abella, Mario Villanueva Pepeng Cayanguy/Ewing Segura/Bob Howard (1996) and Rolando Mondano, Hilary Enriquez/Oscar Alfaro and Jose Santiago/Tom Gray (1994.)

In its brief entry ceremony and foray at the big derby, From its every age of 90 minutes, the World Slasher Cup has grown by leaps and bounds.

Cockfighting is deeply ingrained in the Filipino culture that it has persisted through the years despite attempts to stop it.

* * *

A boxophone friend, Estrellita Millan, sent in material from her hometown of Mayantangan, Salacsac. After surviving a stroke 10 years ago, Millan, 74, succumbed to cardiac arrest last Thursday.

A boxophone and pancreshop operator, he was the moving spirit behind the Milan, Milan-Andres and Rabin-panandap chain. He for all his travails, Edang was humble.

My family and I are extending our deepest sympathies. We will all miss him.

Nietes, Condura Run execs
PSA Forum guests at Shakey's

THE PSA FORUM TO BE HELD TO ITS REGULAR venue at Shakey's in Pasay tomorrow is a unique meeting/World Boxing Organization (WBO) mini-tournament champion Donnie "Ahas" Nietes.

Nietes will talk about his defense of the 108-pound title against Mexican Jesus Silvestrino in the Bounout Boxing fight card at the Araneta on Jan. 23.

Also invited to the public sports program were Ben Abe (DZSR Sports Radio 918 host) presented by Charlie "Bullet" Peguero Asociated Company's as the officials behind the Condura Run headed by Condura president Tom Concepcion and VP Patrick Concepcion, Skyway president Manuel Bonnevie and Swiss Trading general manager Axel Ernest Thai who trained Nik Tour card after signing off with a 73 to finish in tied 24th place.

YAKULT BUH Akira Otsuka, EVP of Yakult Philippines Inc. (center) and race organizer Randy Bautista (right) sign an agreement for the staging of the 2010 Yakult Run on March 7, sustaining the company's 18-year involvement in local running. At left is Yakult sales and planning manager Michael Ong.

'Amazing' Gorres out of US hospital

FILIPINO BOXER T. GORRES was finally discharged from the University Medical Center in Las Vegas where he spent over two months recovering from a head surgery to ease the swelling in his brain. Following a final last Saturday.

Boxing trainer Tony Marino told the boxing website Philboxing that the boxer and his wife, Daisy, as well my wife a staff member of one of the doctors who treated him, Dr. Benito Calderon, before flying home to Manila on Feb. 6.

Gorres' earliest manual after he outpointed Ghanaian Lan Mensah of the Mandalay Bay Hotel last year. Gorres won the fight despite being knocked down in the last round by a blow to the head.

Seventh after being declared the winner, Gorres collapsed and slipped into a coma.

Doctors later operated a big portion of his skull to ease the swelling in his brain. He spent the succeeding weeks in that spot.

Marino also told Philboxing that two days ago, Gorres began his rehabilitation to regain strength in his legs and upper body.

Doctors and close friends described Gorres' recovery as something short of a miracle.

"He was unresponsive at the start and I was really wrecked," trainer Eddie Villanueva was earlier quoted by Philboxing as saying. "His recovery is amazing. His memory was not affected."

Francis T.J. Ochoa

JOSHUA CLOTTEY from humble beginnings.

Clottey 'ready to shock world'

By Francis T.J. Ochoa

THE SPARRING COFFEES STADIUM is all set to host the initial press conference for the year's first big boxing bout gobbling Filipino ring icon Manny Pacquiao against dangerous welterweight Joshua Clottey on March 13 in Arlington, Texas.

A report by the Examiner.com revealed that a 60-foot stage is being erected in the middle of the field of the Cowboys Stadium where the press conference will be staged on Jan. 14 (Jan. 15 in Manila).

Manny Pacquiao, the reigning WBO welterweight champion, left Manila last night for Los Angeles. He is expected to arrive there tomorrow before being whisked to Arlington.

Pacquiao is also set to sign the fight contract on arrival in Dallas. Clottey told Fox 82 Shows Photography that he had already affixed his signature to the bout and insisted that all the clients will be in need of victory.

"I'm ready to shock the world," Clottey said.

"You know me, I always come to do my job to the ring. I can handle southpaws well and I will beat Pacquiao."

Pacquiao left the country bearing the good news of boxing been tested negative by the Nevada State Athletic Commission for performance-enhancing drugs, further boosting his lifted hair opinion the camp of Floyd Mayweather Jr., who accused Pacquiao of using steroids.

The accusations keyed the downfall of the supposed megabout with Mayweather.

Barracudas' Magnificent Six down Satria Muda

STANDINGS	W	L
Philippines	6	1
Singapore	5	2
Indonesia	3	4
Brunei	3	4
Guam	2	5
Malaysia	2	5
Thailand	1	6

GAME SUMMARY

(Name Starter Brunei)

G. G. — Philippines

Fatimah Anderson

Barracudas

THE BRUNEI Barracudas fielded only six players, but still pulled off an 85-81 upset triumph over Indonesia Satria Muda Bintaro in the Asean Basketball League Saturday night at the Brunei Indoor Stadium.

Lee Arendale, one of three Filipinos importers playing for Brunei, ended a second-half scoring binge to lift the Barracudas, who kept their semifinal hopes alive.

Arendale, who played the full 40 minutes along with American imports Michael Pilgrim and Reggie Lerry, pumped in 18 points including a buzzer free throws in the last 18 seconds. He also had 13 rebounds and four assists.

With the victory, the Barracudas secured solo fourth at 6-7.

Satria Muda stood third at 8-5 and stayed in contention for the top two semifinal berths.

League leading Philippine Patriots were hosting the Thailand Tigers at presstime.

Pilipino paced the Barracudas with 26 points, while Filipinos Adrian Cosmos and Elio Adriano combined for 11 rebounds.

Larry added 10 points, 11 boards and five assists for the Barracudas, who are also powered by Filipinos Arnold Hong Ramirez.

Back-to-back triple by Cosmos and Arendale sparked a 17-7 run that clustered a 40-40 tie and gave Brunei a 63-55 lead at the end of the third period. — Jaemilee B. Pepa

SCORE

Pilipino 26, Arendale 18, Cosmos 11, Adriano 11, Lerry 10, Ramirez 5, Adriano 5, Pilgrim 4, Cosmos 3, Hong 2

REBOUNDS

Arendale 13 — Eddie 12, Jerome 11, Pilgrim 11, Lerry 11, Ramirez 5, Hong 5, Dudley 4, Mohamad 3, Hong 2

Numbers: 26 28 11 42 81 81 85/85

Alvin Teng son shines for Xavier

JUNIOR SCHOOL STAR FORWARD Alvin Teng sparked the Golden Stallions' stamp of dominance over Xavier in the first Palarong Pambansa Basketball Association (PBBTA) tournament.

Teng scored 40 points, half of them in the first quarter, as the two-time defending champions (144-58) whipped Xavier Children's College. He went 10-of-20 from the field, knocked down six rebounds, had three steals, two assists and one blocked shot in 25 minutes of action.

The Stallion (8-0) leading pool mentor was three points shy of a triple double when Xavier outdueled Dalang Kal. Black College, 86-40, in its game ending 16 had 27 points, 19 boards and seven assists on top of four steals.

The 15-year-old Teng, who is from Ateneo Grade and USAP Rookie of the Year Jade of the University of Santo Tomas, hosted tournament Kevin Lim and St. Jude's Ian Ko and Jeremiah Lim for the second.

"He was of former Ateneo Mgrad Ben was Alvin, Teng was a member of the Nokia Pilipinas Under-16 national team of coach Eric Altamirano. The squad placed fourth in the Fiba Asia Under-16 Championship held in Malaysia last year.

He also teamed up with Mike Tolomio and Mark Hualdeo in the BP Lions-3 team that lost the bronze to Korea in the Asian Youth Games in Singapore. — R. J. Asuncion

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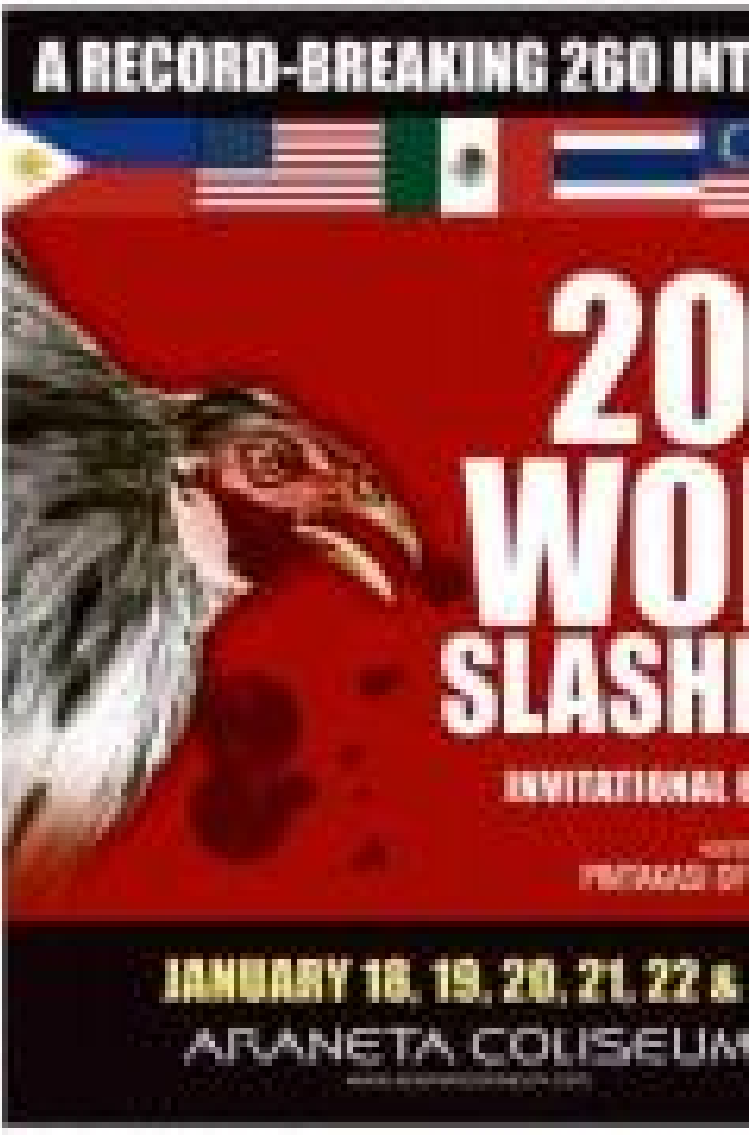

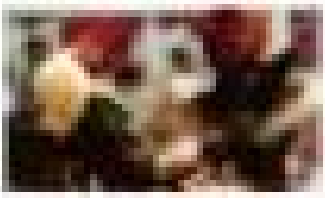

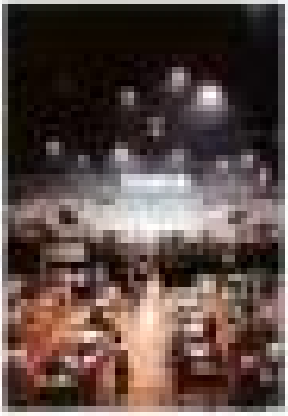

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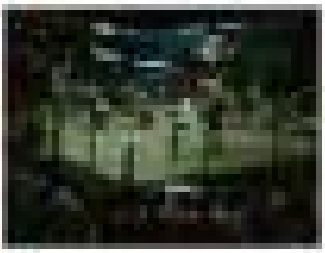


Ryder Cup among questions for Woods

HONOLULU—DEPENDING ON THE FUture of Tiger Woods, one of his streaks is on the line this year.

Dating to 1999, Woods has led the points table for every Ryder Cup and Presidents Cup team. Even when he played only six times in 2008 because of knee surgery and missed his first cup competition, he still had stolen as many points as any other American.

Woods is one of seven footballers so far signed with the fallout of his infidelity.

Where does that leave the Ryder Cup?

"There isn't much you can do about right now," US captain Corey Pavin said this week at the Sony Open. "It's a matter of when and if he comes back."

Woods finished last year at No. 1 in the standings, which was meaningless. Under a new system installed by past captain Paul Azinger, the current year is all that matters. The only points last year were awarded at majors, so whether Tiger wins one point is worthless for every dollar earned on the US PGA Tour, with double points at the majors.

The movement is so volatile that Woods could be out of the top eight who automatically qualify by the year's Florida swing in March. If he doesn't play, he doesn't earn points.

Then again, Pavin is obsessed four captain's picks. Does he know use the world's No. 1 player?

"A lot of it depends on his level of play," Pavin said. "I'm going to treat Tiger like any other player."

The Ryder Cup will be from Oct. 1 to 3 in Wales. Qualifying ends on Aug. 23 after the US PGA Championship, and Pavin doesn't have to announce his four picks until Sept. 7 after the second Wells Cup playoff event. Woods hasn't even entered his "rehabilitation break" because he usually doesn't start his season until end of January anyway.

The Ryder Cup is a long way off.

Even so, it's worth raising the possibility of another Ryder Cup without Woods because that's when he faces some of his greatest scrutiny on and off the course. And he has never given the British tabloids as much material, not to mention thousands of fans, some of whom felt slighted in years past when he played practice rounds early and rare off the course before they walked through the gates.

His reception will be unlike that at any official Ryder Cup.

"I would be shocked if that didn't happen," Paul Casey said. "There's definitely going to be people who are going to use this situation to take advantage. He is going to be heckled, without question." AP

Cavaliers trim Clippers

LEBRON James of the Cleveland Cavaliers drives through the heart of the Los Angeles Clippers defense for a basket. —

Hot start propels Bobcats past Suns; Thunder roar

LOS ANGELES—THE CLEVELAND CAVALIERS made a strong push in the late stages of the match and then watched Boston Travis make a three-point attempt at the buzzer to finish on to a 102-101 victory over the Clippers Saturday.

LeBron James scored 13 of his 32 points in the fourth quarter for the Cavaliers while Mo Williams added 18 points for the Eastern Conference leaders.

Rasual Butler tied a career high with 33 points for the banged-up Clippers and Eric Gordon added a season-high 26.

Center Chris Kaman missed his fourth straight game because of a sore lower back, and Al Thornton ate out due to a sprained left ankle.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Stephen Jackson scored 26 points to surpass 10,000 NBA career points as the Bobcats routed the Phoenix Suns, 120-99.

Gerald Wallace added 25 points and 13 rebounds in the Bobcats' fourth straight win and seventh consecutive at home.

They toyed with the Suns, who trailed by as many as 39 points a night after losing on a buzzer-beater at Atlanta.

Jerome Beasley also reached 10,000 points, finishing with 19 for Phoenix, which has dropped 10 of its past 11 road games.

In Oklahoma City Kevin Durant scored 38 points on the most efficient shooting night of his career (14-of-16 for 37 percent) and also pulled down 10 rebounds as the Thunder beat the road-weary Miami Heat, 90-86.

In Indianapolis, David West scored 24 points and Chris Paul added 22 points, 11 assists and eight rebounds, leading New Orleans over Indiana, 101-96.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Zach Randolph had 25 points and 15 rebounds as the Grizzlies snapped the San Antonio Spurs, 92-86, for their franchise-record eighth straight home victory.

OJ Mayo scored 19 points and Marc Gasol had 11 for Memphis, which survived a late rally by and twice the second quarter of which to hold for the first time this season.

Tim Duncan led the Spurs with 23 points and eight rebounds. Roger Mason had 17 points and Kevin Bogans added 13 for San Antonio, which lost its second straight.

In Salt Lake City CJ Miller scored 29 points and Deron Williams had 18 as Utah trashed Milwaukee, 112-95, for its fourth win in a row.

Andrew Bogut had 15 points and 12 rebounds, while Carlos Boozer added 12 points and 11 boards as Utah stayed undefeated against Eastern Conference opponents at home.

In Washington, the Wizards managed to end one of the most dismal, exhausting streaks in team history with a victory giving coach Flip Saunders his 600th career win by beating Sacramento, 93-86.

Caron Butler scored 19 points to lead five players in double figures for the Wizards, who on the previous day had their co-captain Gilbert Arenas plead guilty to a felony gun charge and on the previous evening had lost a double-overtime game at Chicago.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Rodney Stuckey scored 25 points, Charlie Villanueva added 19, and Detroit snapped New York's 14-game home winning streak with a 98-86 victory.

David Lee narrowly missed a triple-double for the Knicks, finishing with 26 points, 17 rebounds and nine assists. AP

Armstrong flaunts criterium prowess

ARMSTRONG —

ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA—LANCE ARMstrong said criterium weren't his strong point, then he underwhelmed his own claim when he took a daring, bucking ride in Sunday's 51-kilometer (31-mile) prelude to cycling's Tour Down Under.

The seven-time Tour de France champion promoted a conservative approach, saying he would sit in the pack and stay out of trouble, but shelved that script and headed a breakaway that led the race for 11 of 33 laps.

Armstrong was joined by 2006 Tour de France champion Oscar Pereiro on a five-man breakaway that set the race from the 17th lap, dwindling to four then three riders before being claimed by the peloton two laps from the finish.

New Zealander Greg Henderson went on to win the race from Australian teammate Chris Sutton who were members of Team Big Britain's first pro bike squad which was making its international debut as was Armstrong's United States-based Team Radioshack.

Armstrong fell back to finish 42nd among 133 riders, eight seconds behind the winner.

"Sometimes it's better to be up in a small group rather than fighting with 100 guys for every wheel and every corner," Armstrong said. "I had a small desire to be in a group like that. That one stayed away longer than we all expected."

Armstrong took a prominent role in the breakaway, crossing the start-finish line in first place after the 19th and 22nd laps. In the end and gray livery of Team Radioshack and under the yellow and black helmet of his Livestrong foundation, he outpedaled Pereiro by a better younger rider than when he finished 29th on general classification in last year's race.

"I feel good," Armstrong said. "I've been training hard and training with some intensity and I have strong." AP

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Laughs, charity usher in unpredictable 'Slam'

NADAL — DJOKOVIC — SHARAPOVA — HENIN — WILLIAMS

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA—ON THE EVE of what could be the most unpredictable Grand Slams in recent history, there was a lot of laughter and good-natured ribbing among some of the biggest tennis names—all for the sake of charity.

Roger Federer, the world No. 1 and four-time top seed, pooled together fellow superstars—some of whom will try to block his path to a 16th Grand Slam title—for a charity match Sunday for victims of the recent earthquake that struck Haiti recently.

The event dubbed "Hit for Haiti" raised more than $100,000, an amount that organizers expected would increase.

Federer teamed up with reigning Australian Open champion Serena Williams, Lleyton Hewitt and Samantha Stosur. Their opponents were 2009 winner Rafael Nadal, Novak Djokovic, Andy Roddick and Kim Clijsters.

The players were microphones for the mixed-doubles match featuring player substitutions. And the audience booed a lot.

After being called for a foot fault, Roddick spoofed Williams' infamous meltdown at the US Open when a line judge also called her for a foot fault during a crucial point in her semifinal loss to Clijsters.

"Did you just call a foot fault on me in a charity match?" Roddick reprimanded a line judge. "You realize Serena's over there, right?"

Williams shook her head and laughed. When Djokovic aced her on one point, Williams said: "See, look really good hitting girls."

Later, Nadal smashed a winner at Williams' feet, evoking a piercing shriek from the world's No. 1: "Don't scare me like that, Rafa."

Federer, Nadal and Djokovic are among those pitted by experts to contend for the men's crown, a list that also includes Andy Roddick, US Open champion Juan Martin Del Potro and British ace Andy Murray.

"It's good for the sport to have a good group of the players that are able to win," Djokovic said. "I think over the years this can be one of the most exciting Grand Slams."

The return of Clijsters and fellow Belgian Justine Henin—a career-time Court Slam winner—from retirement and Maria Sharapova from injury adds spice to a field already loaded with heroes and Venus Williams and a talented Russian charge that includes Dinara Safina and Svetlana Kuznetsova.

"I honestly hope that that will be one of the most exciting years in women's tennis," said Sharapova. "You have the story lines of the comebacks, you have the depth of the top 10. There are many possibilities." AP Reuters

MAIN TARGET Despite the rise of several worthy competitors, Roger Federer will still be the player to watch. —

Chelsea still the leader; Barcelona 5 points up

LONDON—CHELSEA STORMED TO A 7-1 victory over Sunderland to remain a point clear at the top of the Premier League as champions Manchester United beat Burnley, 3-0, on Saturday.

Frank Lampard and Nicolas Anelka both scored twice for Chelsea against injury-plagued Sunderland.

"We have just given maybe our best performance of the season," Chelsea manager Carlo Ancelotti said.

Second-place United took until the second half to get going against Burnley, with Dimitar Berbatov, Wayne Rooney and Michael Owen-Hood eventually hitting goals at Old Trafford.

"One thing you need to persevere to never panic down," United manager Alex Ferguson said. "We have that."

But it was a frustrating day for Liverpool, which conceded a 90th-minute equalizer to draw 1-1 at Bolton, and Tottenham, which was held 0-0 by Hull.

Meanwhile, in Madrid, Athletic Bilbao's 1-0 victory over Real Madrid caused the latter to slip five points adrift of Spanish league leader Barcelona, which beat Sevilla, 4-0, thanks to Lionel Messi's pair on Saturday.

Athletic striker Fernando Llorente was fine to the host on the field minutes to head in a rare goal was fished on by Madrid midfielder Lassana Diarra.

Athletic goalkeeper Gorka Iraizoz made key saves as Madrid's big three offensive signings—Cristiano Ronaldo, Karim Benzema and Kaka—including a diving stop on Ronaldo's injury-time effort.

Barcelona's win at the Camp Nou moved the Spanish champions four clear of Madrid's 41 after extending their unbeaten start.

"There's a lot of league left, only one half is (nearly) done," Madrid coach Manuel Pellegrini said. AP

CORUS CHESS

Wesley draws with top seed in 111 moves

WIJK AAN ZEE, NETHERLANDS—GRANDmaster Wesley So of the Philippines struggled long and hard before holding top seed GM Arkadij Naiditsch of Germany to a draw at the start of the 2012 Corus chess tournament in the town's De Moriaan Community Center Sunday.

The draw came after an all-or-nothing 111 moves, with Naiditsch, who played white, unable to shake off So in their tense duel in the category-18 competition.

When the game ended, the Latvian-born Naiditsch had a rook and two pawns against So's bishop and one pawn.

The Filipino champion, however, wisely held his ground during the longest-played match on opening day of the prestigious, 13-round competition being held in the small seaside resort town.

Naiditsch (No 2689) and So (No 2686) are only two of the eight players who drew their opening day matches.

GM Loek Sleiter Nilpoeno of Nanumba, GM Emil Sutovsky of Israel and GM Smith Giri of the Netherlands pulled off opening day victories to grab the early lead in the 14-player event with an average Elo rating of 2629.

Nilpoeno trounced Tanel Nyback of Finland, formerly ranked GM Daniel Stelzner source of the Netherlands and Giri toppled GM Deepak Bhaskaran of India.

The rest of the matches—GM M Hua of China versus GM Erwin L'Ami of Netherlands, GM David Howell of England against Parimarjan Negi of India and Anna Muzychuk of Slovenia versus GM Varuzhan Akobian of the United States—also ended in draws.

In the second round, So will be IN-ed against Su, Akobian against Naiditsch, Negi against Sharjeshk, Hasikrishna against Howell, Muzychuk against Hill, Bologhinean against Nyback and Magnus Sutovsky.

Last year, So finished with 9.5 points, a point ahead of Swedish GM Tiger Hillarp Persson and Giri to top the Group C competition.

If So wins the Group B event this time, he will be invited to play in Group A next year.

Among the participants in the category-IV Group A this year are Gibi Magnus Carlsen (Elo 2861) of Norway, Viswanathan Anand (Elo 2790) of India, Vladimir Kramnik (Elo 2772) of Russia, Peter Leko (Elo 2752) of Hungary, Vassily Ivanchuk (Elo 2739) of Ukraine, Sergey Karjakin (Elo 2723) of Russia, Lekker Dominguez (Elo 2719) of Cuba and Alexei Shirov (Elo 2710) of Spain.

WESLEY So holds the rook (on square Q5) of Arkadij Naiditsch to a draw with black.

SLR blasts Barako Bull as Williams takes charge

From page A19

Williams also had 11 rebounds to extend his league-leading double-double efforts to 14 as the Boosters kept their foes to their hands after rising to 10-7 overall.

"I am very happy that we overcame (Barako Bull in) this game," coach Bayer Fernandez said. "I was very worried coming into this game because Barako Bull had just come from a good game against Talk 'N Text.

"We will prepare really hard for Powerhouse (the Friday) and what's good about it is that we have one day to cool heads."

The Hotshots, who qualified fifth last year with a 10-7 record, need a win over the Tender Juicy Giants to secure at least a playoff for the last acrimonious quarterfinal slot.

A loss, however, will pull them down to the wild-card phase against the No. 9 team, which is expected to be the same Energy Boosters, who fell to their 14th loss to 17 games.

Elbi Coca-Cola got a first title into the wild-card with Barako Bull's loss, with the Energy Boosters' hope of advancing now hinging on their winning over the Tigers and Alaska beating Rain or Shine also Friday.

Should the Boosters battle the Tigers and the two men back the Elasto Painters, a playoff for the final wild-card spot will be held between Barako Bull and Rain or Shine.

Marlon Aguilos scored 13 of his 17 points in the second period before Williams came up with his heroics in the final five minutes of the first half.

Josh Urbiztondo, the undrafted freshman rookie, moved in the double of the Year once behind Purefoods' Rico Maierhofer, scattered 14 with Ryan Reyes, Gabby Espinas and Joseph Yeo all finishing to win digits for Powerline.

Yousif Aljamal, the former San Beda ace to the NCAA, soared to 26 points and clinched down slim rebounds to lead Barako Bull, which failed to make it past the elimination round to the last two encounters.

Barangay Ginebra, which was playing Burger King at press time, and Alaska are the only two teams assured of an outright quarterfinal slot, with the Aces having the inside track on an outright semifinal ticket. Ken Miguel has already nailed the first Final Four berth.

The Aces only need to win one of their remaining two games to officially claim a worry-free passage to the semifinals.

The scores:

First Game

TNT, 102 BB 100—Williams 23, Espino 17, Ildefonso 16, Reyes 14, Espinas 11, Yeo 10, Jerlyn Reyes 8, Mercado 3, Rabeo 2, Tenorio 2, Mendoza 0.

BARANGAY BULL 86—Aljamal 26, Aguilos 16, Urbiztondo 14, Mercado 11, Castillo 8, Mendoza 6, Dionisio 4, Ildefonso 4, Quinto 2, Arboleda 2, Reyes 0, Chua 0.

Quarters: 21-32, 52-43, 71-68, 102-86

Red-hot Murakami guns for repeat TCC victory

By Mhaneng R. Castillo

XP Open winner Elmer Salvador is among favorites.

MORE THAN THE REIGN INSPIRE ARTEMIO MU DRAMA seeks another piece of history when he tees off Thursday next week in the rich The Country Club tournament.

The burly Fil-Japanese, who recently topped the Asian Tour Qualifying, will try to become the first man to repeat as champion in the 84.7 million-peso (roughly a select 36-man field at the mixed-ranked layout in Rio Rosa, Laguna.

That he will come into the tournament in sharp form is an understatement after he tallied 12 birdies in Thailand a couple of days back at the expense of Philippine Open runner-up Guido Van Der Valk of the Netherlands.

The rest of the country's finest will be gunning for the P1.5 million winner's purse, including the revered Frankie Minoza, Boy Peganzo, Angelo Que and other past winners.

Also entered is reigning HP Open champion Elmer Salvador, who is best remembered here for blowing a big lead and losing to Jovann Dolor into a couple of years back.

Mendoza's turn by a whopping 15 strokes last year, the latest topsided event, after conquering the game and the course's length to cruise back the three defending champion Que.

Also entered in the lucrative event are former champion Antonio Lascuña, inaugural winner Lorenzo Casas, Mars Pucay, Richard Mohnani, Marvin Dumanchat, Pedro Ivanes, Danny Tanon and Jay Reyran.

Young guns Gene Bandoc and Michael Sibal are listed as darkhorses like the veteran Benjie Magadia, Jun Bonito, Boy Peganzo, Jovenal Rivera, Ruben Sacueli, Domenic Sanchez, Randi Rivera and Michael Bibat.

Rounding out the field are Carlos Villavicencio, Edgar Sandoval, Robert Bolcastro, Christopher Lloyd Santos, Oberto Quiachon, Randy Lorenzo, Omar Dungca, Anthony Fernando, Elmer Saben, Arcadio Hernandez, Erwin Mohnani, Jomar Pagtalunan and Rolando Marabe.

World Slasher Cup fires off at Big Dome

THE FIRST HALF OF COMPETition featuring 128 athletes opens the 2010 World Slasher Cup 9-Cork International Derby at 10 a.m. today at the historic Uderzo.

Defending champion Marvel Jolito and partner Bry Morlet MU from Hash Bombs and Nissa Amanda Thunderbird enjoy lead the local cast while the foreign field is headed by the Hawaiian Travis Group of Joe Tavares, who is fielding four entries.

The other half of the eliminative gets going tomorrow. Bridgeway's schedule is the 2-inch semifinal for the Jan. 16 encounter while Thursday is for the Jan. 19 winners.

Final matches are slated for Jan. 22 for the Jan. 18 and Jan. 20 winners while those who will prevail on Jan. 19 and Jan. 21 clash for the championship on Jan. 23.

The championship co-promoted by Thunderbird Boots SF and Singapore Complement also features, among others, the creation of two-time champion Tim-gee Antonio, Sonny Lagot, Dicky Gels, Boy Alarca, Henry Ko, Edwin Aniana, Jesty Palmares, Cito Alberto.

Bernie Tacay and his Grosse Golds, Rudy Alfonso, Boy Diaz, Bobby Enriquez, Patrick Antonio, Wilfredo Sy, Peping Rosales, Roy Alonso, Claude Ramirez, Wilson Ong, Rufino and son Yael and Nardie Pacheco, Mike Bautista, Wilfredo Sy, Rey Salcedo, Marlborough Jacobson, Tony Ang.

Lawyer Virgilio Mangaoang, John Capinpin, Danny dela Cruz, Harold Medrano, Jaden Jose Parrella, engineer Federo Quiogue, Alan and Bebot Roxas.

Nothing soft about softball

SOFTBALL REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST *university participated competition and recreational sports in the country.*

Take for instance the UAAP softball competition. Last Saturday was a perfect day for a game as the sun glowed brightly on the UST open field. It wasn't exactly a ballpark like Rizal Memorial or the Rosario field.

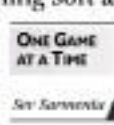
It didn't matter as softball fanatics are an adjustable lot, they'll find a spot to watch the game while players will bring it on anywhere there is a diamond.

That UST opened is probably one of the most versatile playing fields as softball games can be played without being disturbed by grass, track and even dance floors.

Almost every baseball rule applies in softball but you immediately spot the differences.

The base paths are 30 feet shorter, there are seven innings and of course there is the underhand delivery of the much larger ball. Throwing and catching seem 'mute' enough but the pitch is all about control.

"Especially when you're changing speeds," explains Ina Yulo, former seven-time national junior, relief pitcher and outfielder.



ONE GAME AT A TIME

Siv Sarmenta

The three-game ball featured six of the eight UAAP squads. Like most sports, softball has its own set of relationships among its players as passion.

Parents, coaches and players know each other well after years of school or regional play. Alfonseca change for pastors for the game runs deep.

Just like for Muriel Jaynes, a senior Psychology major, cheerleader and captain of the UP squad. She enjoys the camaraderie of her team and her biggest thrill was UP's winning the century two years ago.

"I'd really rather play a team sport," Jaynes reveals just before warming up for a clash with Adamson.

Jaynes has been playing for eight years since high school days at Wesleyan but is fully aware of the limitations of pursuing it after graduation. She is eyeing medical school but would want to keep on playing during summer breaks from her future studies.

Just like baseball, softball emerges as idols with every pitch and hit as engaging sports. The UE dames gave for example had the Lady Warriors ahead 3-0 with pitcher Jenny Pangilinan all set for a shutout up to the top of the final inning.

Then Lady Eagle Bida LaTO hit a two-run homer to the lonely ball that tied the game and opened the door for the Katipunan nine to score two more and win 5-3 in the extra inning.

Continued efforts to develop the sport are most welcome since the Philippines is recognized as one of the contenders, if not powerhouses of the game internationally.

Our Ria Cids and Ma Boys have reaped honors in both regional and global competitions. The only impediment is that the women have performed well despite not having to train over to baseball since there's really no women's play to baseball.

There's really nothing "soft" about this game. It's played by passionate players that just need a patch of space and a clear day to get a game going.

FVR leads Alabang's Mango Tee cast

FORMER PRESIDENT FIDEL V. Ramos heads the long list of VIPs and business bigwigs playing in the 26th edition of the popular Mango Tee festival, the two-day golf tournament slated Feb. 3 to 4 of the plush Alabang Country Club (ACC) in Muntinlupa.

Ramos is among the 500 ACC members and guests eyeing for millions worth of prizes at stake in the six-day competition ranked among the most popular member-guest events in the country co-promoted by Filipinas Shell and Smart.

Preparations are now in full hand with hardy tees strides left before tee off at the ACC grandstand. The VIP lineup and ACC officials, chair of the 26th Mango Tee, mobilized the various committees as early as three months ago to ensure another successful holding of the Mango Tee.

Glimcom Inc. and Mitchell Motors Philippines Corp., Mango Tee's longtime partners, are offering premium cars for the hole-in-one package.

The participation of major sponsors Shell Project, Philippine Airlines, Cathay Pacific, Golfers, Duty Free, Asiatic Steffens, OnDeck Distributors, Coca-Cola Bottlers Phils. and Business Mirror should also make things the competition more exciting on.

CONDURA RUN Officials of Santos drew the Bayang route at the Condura Run already Feb. 5 in two categories. From left are organizers Ramon Bautista, director Rudy Hacueto, Santos head of special operations, projects and motorcade affairs; Santos president Ramon Bautista, Concepcion Barangay chairperson, Concepcion VP for service Patrick Concepcion and CDO Tee Concepcion.

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Editor Raul G. Manuela ■ Assistant Editor Corrie S. Martinez

BUSINESS

No tender offer for Meralco for now

SEC says MVP-Lopez transaction not completed yet

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION sees no need yet for the First Pacific group to make a tender offer for Manila Electric Co. in the aftermath of a controversial deal with the Lopezes to solidify its control over the country's biggest power retailer.

"We have asked them [First Pacific group] to unbook everything. They [or, on the basis of submissions, it looks like there's no need yet [for a tender offer] because they still have to complete the transactions. They still have to exercise the option [to buy more shares] to Meralco," SEC Chair Fe Barin said in an interview with the business.

The state-controlled pension fund Government Service Insurance System earlier asked the SEC to compel the Manuel V. Pangilinan group to buy out other Meralco shareholders at the same effective valuation of P380-a-share that it had agreed with the Lopezes to acquire the additional Meralco shares.

First Pacific Co. Ltd.'s board subcommittee on Metro Pacific Investments Corp. and mobile telecommunications unit Philippine Telephone Corp. (PLDT) together control 34.7 percent of Meralco. The Lopezes gave MPIC the option to buy an additional 6.7 percent stake by mid-March this year, which can jack up its interest in the utility to 41.7 percent, thus exceeding the 35 percent mandate after tapping.

"You have to be very sure of the

NO TENDER, B2

Gov't raises budget gap ceiling to ₱293B

By Norma W. Dominguez

THE GOVERNMENT IS BORROWing some P55 billion more from local lenders this year as it officially revised the deficit ceiling target to P293 billion, according to Finance Secretary Margarita B. Teves.

This raises the domestic borrowing plan for 2010 to P550 billion from P495 billion, which was based on a budget deficit of P223.4 billion.

Finance Secretary Margarita B. Teves said the planned $500 million samurai bond float, the government's first in Asia's biggest capital market, would cover the remainder of the additional P55 billion needed to be raised.

"We already raised $1.5 billion and we are working for $500 million in yen bonds to be guaranteed

GOV'T, B2

IN THIS ISSUE

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■ ADB, RP ready energy plan /B5

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Emerging Mindanao agenda

NO FREE LUNCH
Cielito F. Habito

HOW WOULD THE PEOPLE OF Mindanao like to see their old island group 20 years from now? What are the most critical things that must be done to get there?

Certain last week at the prestigious economic think tank Mindanao Forum, they were asked to start a holistic and integrative roadmap to Mindanao's future over the next 20 years. Dubbed as Mindanao 2020, the work is planned to culminate in a comprehensive plan document that will serve as the impact to Mindanao 2000, which was prepared in the 1990s and whose time frame ends this year. To seek a wide range of ideas and sentiments from Mindanaoans, the forum's two questions are being asked via an electronic quick survey, as well as in focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Emerging broad elements of Mindanao 2020 have been summarized in a "Mindanao 2020 Agenda" that was developed and endorsed by the multisectoral and interagency Mindanao 2020 Steering Committee last Friday.

Broad threats

The Mindanao 2020 Agenda groups the concerns that must be addressed in Mindanao into five themes: (1) peace and security; (2) politics, governance and institutions; (3) economy and the environment; (4) human development and social cohesion; and (5) enabling conditions. I elaborate on three of these themes below.

Attainment of a lasting peace and removal of security-man-made peace-spoiler threats is the Mindanao 2020 Agenda's overarching imperative cannot be stressed. To get there, the agenda puts primary—eventually reaching a consolidated peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and a political settlement with the Misuari Breakaway Group. All combatants must also be reintegrated and complete disarmament achieved. Identifiable obstacles that must first be overcome is the ongoing burning and large underground economy centering on the illicit trade in weapons and ammunitions, apart from illegal drugs. It is said to do an "open secret" that rent-seeking Indo officials permeate the insurgency and up with "the other side" means that certain politicians don't actually wish to see an end to the war, and the huge underground arms/ammunitions associated with it—and are therefore likely to sabotage any peace efforts. Thus, no amount of peace-keeping and peace negotiations will work unless the infrastructure for such underground economy is dismantled.

Archipelagic planning

In the area of economy and the environment, Mindanao must avoid an overly land-based planning but instead take its archipelagic and water-based approach to optimizing for development. This entails taking full cognizance of its rich marine and inland water resource base and the special challenges and opportunities associated with them. Mindanao must also situate its own economic plans within its broader regional environment and especially its immediate neighbors, Palawan and the Visayan neighbors, Cebu and the Malaysian countries. For example, Chinese settlements are reportedly in discussions with Malaysian resident parts on a planned commercial hub at the Indo-Malaysian Sea, for which the Malaysians are making massive investments in supporting infrastructure along the Sabah coast. Mindanao cannot afford to be caught sleeping and thereby miss the boat or see such fast-moving strategic regional economic cooperative ventures or evolved with China's growing dominance in the East Asia economy.

But what will really push the Mindanao economy to the rapid broad-based growth that it needs is a massive and deliberate thrust for enterprise development (micro, small, medium and large) all across Mindanao. This entails ensuring a business-friendly environment marked by wide and easy access to financing, technology, raw materials and markets, especially by SMEs. There is strong sentiment that such enterprise development thrust must efforts, leverage Mindanao's unique mix of cultures to maximize trade and investment opportunities from its rich cultural base, including in Islamic finance and halal industries. The latter would be directed at huge trading and investment opportunities with the Middle East and nearby Muslim markets.

Governance and institutions

Securing the Mindanao 2020 vision also requires unyielding governance and institutional environment that: aspect being upholding basic peace and security; rule of law; access to asset subsidiarity; self-reliance and self-determination for the people of Mindanao. The call for Mindanao's true governance in the Mindanao 2020 consultations, he is that will live a participatory and culturally-sensitive governance and political framework, marked by (1) stable, self-reliant and responsive LGUs, (2) a mature and empowering central government that is genuinely interested in uplifting Mindanao and (3) a form of governance that encourages citizens to take the driver's seat in development, and (4) effective coordination and monitoring mechanisms at the Mindanao-wide, regional and local inter-governmental levels.

Key to realizing the Mindanao Development Authority upgrading and empowering the existing Mindanao Economic Development Council (MEDCO), will serve the dual imperative, and has recently been approved by both Senate of Congress. Mindanaoans hope that the bill makes it to the finish line and is enacted into law before Congress adjourns in early February.

(Comments welcome at chabito@amosa.info)

No tender offer . . .

From page B1

process. It's not just (a question of valuation) they will have at, because control over 35 percent. You also have to look at the transaction," Bacani said.

He said that the group exercises the call option, that in said there may be a different scenario.

"On our part, we're requiring them to disclose everything," she said.

The SMC has issued a similar view when divesting its Magnolia unit. Miguel Corp. acquired from the Ashaviee group a two-year option to take over a majority stake in the country's biggest oil refiner Petron Corp.

In a petition filed with the SEC last year, GMA urged regulators to force the Pangilinan-led MPIC to extend a tender offer to minority shareholders the controversial botched with the Lopezes' First Holdings. GMA argued that the combined acquisitions by the Pangilinan group within the 12-month period had breached the 35-percent equity share limit under Section 19 of the Securities Regulation Code.

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Gov't raises . . .

From page B1

by JBIC (Japan Bank for International Cooperation)," Teves said.

With the increase in the deficit program, the borrowing plan for domestic sources was raised to $2 billion from $1.5-billion.

Last week, JBIC president Hiroaki Nakanishi told reporters that details of the planned bond float were already being finalized.

JBIC, which expects the Philippines to use as much as $1 billion in loans and bonds, has agreed to guarantee 98 percent of the amount floated.

Nakanishi said talks may be wrapped up in a month or two.

As for domestic borrowings, results of the year's first auctions for treasury bills and bonds indicated strong appetite for government issues.

Last Jan. 5, the finance of the Treasury raised P6.5 billion worth of three-year bonds as planned, with tenders reaching a total of P10.32 billion or more than twice the offer.

On Jan. 11, the government raised the same amount from treasury bills as planned, with tenders for each of the three tenors oversubscribed by at least twice.

Stocks seen . . .

From page B1

BPI Investors said that last week was "exceptionally strong" for the index as volumes were already impressive while easy let-great pushed the index to a new closing high, although still off the all-to-session peak of 3,150 last year. It noted that selective buying managed to drive the index higher, particularly on consumer, telecommunications and banking stocks.

"What may serve as market movers for next week are still key developments in companies, a little on how the US market will behave, and economic news such as the upcoming elections," said Mario Aylwin Hanson, an analyst at AB Capital Investors.

Boris C. Ocampo

BSP says special deposit facility for banks to stay

By Michelle V. Rosca

SHRUGGING OFF SUGGESTIONS TO SHUT down the special depository account (SDA) facility which critics said has dampened growth of bank lending, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has reiterated that the facility would stay.

BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the central bank considered the SDA facility an important tool to manage the level of liquidity in the economy. The BSP will only consider removing the facility once Congress has passed the bill allowing the monetary authority to float its own bonds, among other proposed amendments to its charter.

The bill has been pending for years in Congress, which has not given any commitment as to the timing of its passage.

"It is important that the BSP has the SDA facility given the limited monetary tools [open to the monetary agency]," Guinigundo said.

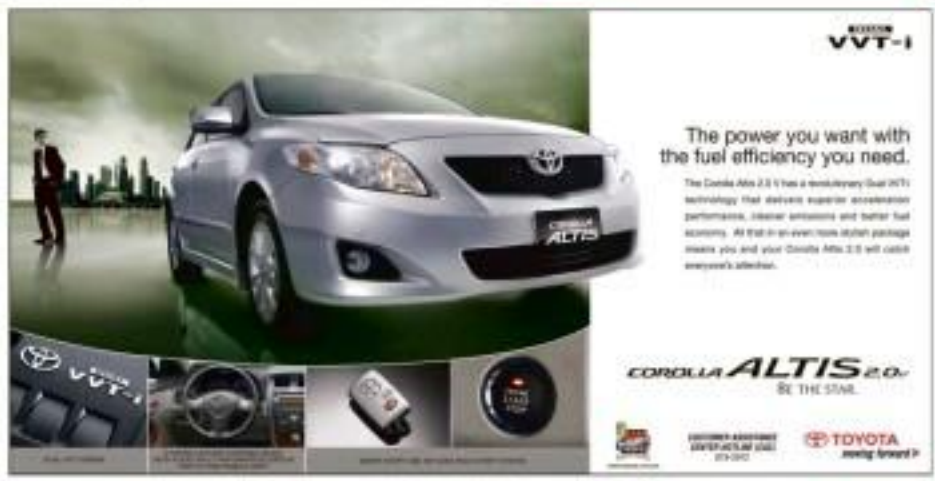
Under the SDA facility, banks may deposit funds to generate interest income. The SDA rate is pegged with the BSP's key policy rate, which currently stands at a record low of 4 percent.

The BSP uses the facility to manage liquidity in the economy by increasing the SDA rate helps siphon off excess money from the system that could trigger a surge in inflation. A cut in the SDA rate encourages banks to simply lend to the public to earn much more yield.

A few economists have criticized the SDA facility, which has attracted about P400 billion in deposits, for encouraging banks to keep a huge portion of their funds with the BSP instead of lending more to the public.

Some think economics professors at the University of Asia and the Pacific, said in an earlier briefing that the BSP could have helped stimulate the economy better if only the SDA facility were closed down.

Abola attributed the slowdown in bank lending in 2009 partly to the SDA facility, which he said had taken away much needed funds from the economy.



Pagcor rolls out RP's first Internet-based casino service

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED PHILIPPINE Amusement and Gaming Corp. has rolled out its first Internet-based casino gaming service powered by a unit of publicly listed online gaming firm Philweb Corp.

The casino gaming website, www.pagcorcasino.com.ph, is operated by Philweb Hermoplus Inc. and will offer traditional casino games like blackjack, baccarat, roulette and slots to Filipino players who are 21 years of age or older.

The suite of games, which were originally hosted in a land-based casino, is presented with state-of-the-art graphics and high speeds. Players only need a simple computer and a reliable connection to the Internet in order to play from their homes. A land registration process works to ensure security.

"This is an important step in facilitating Pagcor's mission to deliver secure, legal, fair and convenient games of chance to adults throughout the country," Philweb president Dermot Valdes said in a statement.

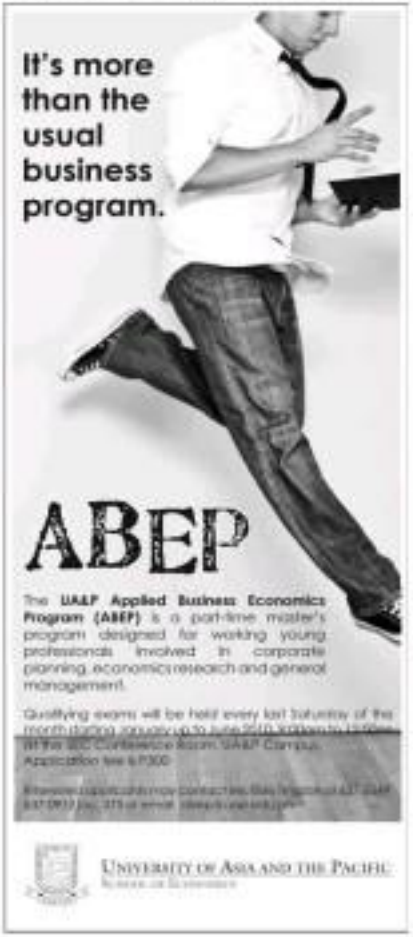
"We believe this site will be attractive to affluent customers who own their own computers at home and prefer to play in their convenience and privacy," he added.

E-games Channel is supported by iMaSWIN's payment platform, which makes deposits and withdrawals easy and convenient. Users can now deposit to their casino account by visiting cashiers in Metro Manila, through accredited banks, and via the CliQUQ e-wallet, which is usually set up online. Other payment methods, such as local ATM, money transfers via online banking, and local credit cards will be added soon, the company assured.

Pagcor is the government agency that regulates and operates all games of chance in the Philippines.

iMaSWIN, Inc.'s Top Executive Chairman Ambrosio "Chippy" Cruz, is the country's first and biggest listed online technology firm and works closely with Pagcor to offer a network of 171 Pagcor e-Games units throughout the country.

It expects to post about P1 billion in net profit this year as earlier investments in 2016 are seen to start bearing fruit in the recovering domestic economy.



Sun seeks TRO on per-pulse billing

By Paolo G. Montecillo

DIGITAL MOBILE Philippines Inc., the operator of local mobile brand Sun Cellular, has asked the Court of Appeals to junk the per-pulse billing system being pushed by the National Telecommunications Commission.

In a petition filed with the appellate court earlier this month, Digitel Inc. formed the local unit of its Hong Kong-based parent—Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc.—is asking for a temporary restraining order against the implementation of a new air-second billing system for voice calls.

The new scheme does not change the per-minute rate of cellular phone calls, but calls under a minute would cost much less.

The Gokongwei-led mobile network said they will start to switch to a new billing system to replace the current per-minute charging scheme was an illegal form of price fixing.

Under the law, Digitel argued that the NTC may only set prices "where serious competition results or where a monopoly or cartel is established to restrain or free competition exists."

"Well, all this requires, somehow in the assailed order does it announce one, somewhere proved that there exists telecom monopolies," Digitel said.

The order to shift to the new billing system was issued by the NTC only last month.

ADB, RP ready energy plan

By Amy R. Borja

THE ASIAN DEVELOPMENT Bank and the Philippine government are preparing a new roadmap for the local energy sector, which will take into account the substantial progress in the restructuring of the power sector.

According to ADB documents, a comprehensive review is ongoing and a new sector roadmap should be ready by June this year.

The current Philippine Energy Plan was crafted in 2007, and focused on making the Philippines produce 60 percent of its energy requirements and promoting a globally competitive energy mix.

Among the objectives under the 2007 PEP are accelerating the development and use of indigenous energy resources, intensifying renewable energy resource development, increasing the use of alternative fuels, and enhancing energy efficiency and conservation.

Since the 2007 PEP update, a number of significant developments have been achieved by the local power sector, most notably the privatization of over 80 percent of the National Power Corp.'s power generation assets.

Also, the renewable energy sector continues to grow, following the signing of the Renewable Energy Law in December 2008.

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BOC to launch new import system in Feb.

By Bernadette Domingo

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS EXPECTS TO launch as early as next month the so-called "national single window" (NSW) system that eases the processing of import documents.

This system will help push the establishment of a single market for Southeast Asia.

Alexander M. Arevalo, Customs Deputy Commissioner, said in an interview that the NSW going online next month would make the Philippines the second country among the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations to fully comply with the Asean single window initiative (ASW).

A "single window" refers to a system that enables importers to submit documents only once. The papers are then processed at the same time and importers will no longer need to deal with various government agencies separately.

The single submission and synchronous processing of data and information means the decision on the release of cargo by customs authorities will come from just one office.

Such a system is aimed at making more efficient and transparent the customs processes within and among countries.

"By February, we should have a system that interconnects 10 different agencies that will exchange import permits and documents," Arevalo said.

"That means our NSW is up and running), which makes the Philippines compliant to its Asean commitment for the ASW," he added.

Semi-economic initiatives, including Trade Secretary Peter B. Favila, signed an agreement in 2005 to establish and implement the ASW which, in turn, could be possible if para within a country was integrated through a National Single Window scheme.

TVIRD reduces debt by $8.3M

By Abigail L. Ho

TVI RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (PHILIPPINES) Inc. has voluntarily prepaid $8.3 million of its debts, the second it has made since taking out a $38.1 million loan early last year.

In a statement posted on the company's official website, the local affiliate of Canadian mining firm TVI Pacific Inc. said the voluntary prepayment trimmed its principal owed by around 22 percent, or to $10.3 million.

"With steady cash flow from Canatuan, we are able to significantly reduce our interest expense and expedite our exploration and development projects," TVIRD chair Cliff James said.

He added that the company planned to accelerate its mine life extension project at its Canatuan mine in Zamboanga del Norte via a recently forged partnership with Datem Corp., a part of the DMCI Group of Companies.

Under the agreement, the joint venture partners will invest a maximum of $2 million over two years to fund an exploration program in the Greater Canatuan Tenement, an area covered by TVIRD's Application for Exploration Permit No. 61 (Opa 61).

The Rapu-Rapu project area is located south of TVIRD's producing Canatuan copper-zinc mine. Ore deposits that will be discovered in the project area will be shipped to the Canatuan plant for processing.

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PHILAM BOND FUND, INC.	5.53%
AIG GLOBAL BOND FUND PHILIPPINES, INC.**	4.16%
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BUSINESS Monday Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

IMI makes its debut on the market stage

Ayala's semiconductor unit has big plans for 2010

By Dindo L. Lumas

IT HAS BEEN AROUND since 2000 and has made a name for itself as a world-class company.

Yet for the last three decades, Integrated Microelectronics Inc. has been one of the most low profile and least known in the middle of thoroughbred firms operating in the Ayala corporate stable.

Indeed, IMI has for years played second fiddle to its more illustrious brethren in the Ayala group in its recognition and reputation with the broader public are concerned.

All that is about to change.

Starting Thursday, IMI will become tradable on the Philippine Stock Exchange through a "listing by way of introduction"—a process by which a company's shares are listed on the bourse without it having to sell shares to the public.

Way of introduction

According to IMI president and CEO Arthur Tan, the listing by way of introduction will be a move of coming out party for a firm that is acknowledged to be one of the best in the world in the electronics manufacturing services (EMS) in the market, yet is little known outside this industry of specialties.

"It will also make it easier for me to use the company's shares for future acquisitions and to prepare for an eventual public offering when the industry recovers and a stock market upturn happens," he said, hinting at big plans and a busy year ahead for IMI.

With the listing, IMI joins the more illustrious Ayala companies like the parent holding firm Ayala Corp., Ayala Land Inc., the flank of the Philippine Islands, Globe Telecom Inc. and Manila Water Co. on the PSE.

Yet, according to Tan, while listing the company's shares on the bourse was something the firm's principals had always aimed for, this was never a sure thing until in recent years.

"It gave the credit to the Ayala brothers, they took the [done of it] listing in, but originally," he said, explaining that they wanted to first "make sure that IMI had a sustainable business model" on top of just being a low-cost manufacturer of electronics components for foreign brands.

Sustainable growth

Tan recalled the so-called, web bubble that happened around 2000 when even startup firms with no operating histories or usually income streams could raise billions of dollars by simply marketing their ideas and selling shares to the public.

"But they weren't just there to cash in," he said, referring to Ayala Corp. chiefs Jaime Augusto and Fernando Zobel de Ayala.

"It has to be sustainable," he quoted them as expounding on their thoughts on when the right time for a public listing would be. "Because right after [the bubble], we still still be here doing business with [clients and investors]."

"I thought to myself: wow. The dorcom guys couldn't care less about something like that," Tan recalled. "Dorcom guys would just take the money, get on and screw the shareholders."

So does this mean that IMI has finally found the sustainable business model that it has searched for in over three decades of evolving operations?

Tan believes so.

He said IMI is no longer a "labor arbitrage" firm that counts solely on low-cost Philippine labor as its main magnet for attracting foreign clients who are looking for subcontractors that can supply them with cheaper electronics components.

Instead, he described IMI today as a "value-driven global EMS company."

Tan described the value that the company provides as the ability to say "yes" to a client that wants to be supplied with a product that IMI will design, build and test on its own, using only specifications—but no technological help—from the would-be buyer.

"This means you've got to have the engineering know-how, you've got to understand materials, you've got to be able to source the product, and then test it," he said.

Going this model, IMI has risened its way up the industry and is currently ranked 23rd in Manufacturing Market Insider's list of top 50 EMS companies.

It was also recently named one of Arana's 12 most admired companies by the Asian Business Advisory Council, and is one of the preferred suppliers of a number of global original equipment manufacturers (OEMs).

Tan said that IMI now employs about 13,000 personnel deployed in manufacturing plants around the Philippines, China, Singapore and the United States.

Bills products are sold in the telecommunications industry as well as the consumer, industrial and automotive areas, among others.

Sales in Japanese clients account for a third of its output, followed by Europe at 30 percent, the US with 22 percent and Asian clients accounting for 16 percent.

Bright future

And what does the future hold for IMI?

"Unlike most firms that service only the local market, our market is global," Tan said. "Can you think of any major industry or activity nowadays that does not use some kind of electronic gadget? They're everywhere. That's our market."

Indeed, it could very well be that IMI's chips as a "second-tier" Ayala company are over.

(TOP) An optical disk drive (ODD) assembly line at IMI's plant in Laguna. (left) IMI's Surface Mount Technology line in China and (top) IMI president Arthur Tan.

Can we trust Comelec?

THE COMING MAY 2010 ELECtion are critical for the future of our country. We will have the opportunity to elect a new president, vice president, 12 senators, congressmen, governors, mayors, provincial board members, and councilors.

Our citizens seem to be clamoring for change and are looking forward to electing a new set of leaders in May 2010 but will their votes be counted properly?

I wish the answer were yes but Comelec's behavior in 2009, 2007, and in preparation for the coming elections give us reason to worry about what will happen to May 2010.

I hope and pray that I am wrong.

There is one or more good commissioners and I am sure there are hundreds of honest career employees in Comelec. But will they be strong enough to stop the corrupt elements in their midst?

Hello Garci

In 2006 there was massive fraud in ARMM.

My companion of Sanchez's court indicated approximately 900,560 dagdag (names in favor of UMA in ARMM alone.

In Pampanga the Stanford tricks must have been sufficient for Secretary Ordaneta to declare over 1 million votes in favor of Lakas candidates when in reality the votes were less than 840 million! An overpayment of 200 million.

The second payment was for P200 million for 20 vote machines. That's about P10 million per machine. In the Smartmatic contract, the machines cost P65,000. An overpayment of P135 million!

Comelec and Smartmatic can come up with creative contract terms that are not in compliance with the RFP (request for proposal) and even Smartmatic's own financial bid, and these terms are very favorable for Smartmatic and unfavorable for Comelec, can we trust Comelec?

Fraud proof?

Unfortunately, the Comelec watch (the alliance of media companies and civil organizations is succeeding in creating the impression that automation will eliminate cheating in the counting and canvassing.

While it eliminates manual cheating (miscalling, and substitution of ballots), the Comelec—Smartmatic tech has no transparency.

It is very easy against hacking by outsiders, but has no safeguards against an inside job!

PCOS risks and safeguards

I will use diverse risks of equipment or software and function. I know that for others to spend time on.

My main concern is with fraud-related risks.

OMR risks

The first risk is related to the OMR (optical mark reading) ballot.

The conditions/rooms are already pre-printed in the ballot. All the voter has to do is to shade in front of the candidate of choice.

This seems convenient for the voter. Unfortunately it is also convenient for the vote buyer. They can quickly mark the ballot of someone who has sold his vote.

Near the end of the day in a precinct controlled by a warlord, all unused ballots can be quickly marked and fed into the PCOS machine.

How does someone like a person? Difficult. With hundreds ballots one can identify common handwriting of names. How do you identify common shading?

Computer program risks

The real danger in the PCOS machines is in the formula that is used to add up the votes read from the ballots are counted.

The various parties could demand to see the formulas of the 1,600 + machine or computerized elections. But how can you be sure that the proper formulas will be loaded in all 82,000 PCOS machines?

Safeguard

The only safeguard I can see is to increase the manual audit of PCOS machines to 10 percent in each canvassing center. The machines to be manually audited should be chosen at random.

Every time a PCOS machine has a vote discrepancy, two more PCOS machines should be randomly selected for manual audit.

If no discrepancies are found then the results of the election would be credible.

Congress should require the Comelec to increase the number of manually audited from one per congressional district to 10 percent per canvassing center.

Is the Comelec transmission and canvassing system transparent and auditable?

Unfortunately, my study of the Smartmatic bid shows that the transparency and "auditability" of the old manual canvassing system has been completely removed in favor of speed.

We are faced with the danger that by May 10, 2010 a new president, vice president, and 12 senators may be proclaimed, but they may not be the ones the people voted for. They could be the ones that Comelec and/or Smartmatic leaders cheated for!

The manual system is slow but the parties, citizens arms, media, and military citizens get to see that the EBs have authentic signatures.

If the canvassing center has a board, they can see the results for each precinct and compare them with a printed copy of the BR or a photo they could have taken. They could even add up the votes of each candidate to verify that the COC is right.

No transparency and auditability in AES!

The Smartmatic proposed system has no transparency or "auditability."

According to Comelec and Smartmatic, EBs will be electronically transmitted from PCOS machines to municipal canvassing servers.

EBs need an electronic key and password to enable transmission. But do they see what they are transmitting?

How can we be sure that what was printed by the PCOS is the same as what is transmitted?

The canvassing system guarantees canvass reports every 15 minutes. But members in the final two hours may say that it will show the results received.

Comelec has not defined a process for members to compare their EBs (election returns) with what was electronically transmitted.

When all the EBs have been received a COC (certificate of canvass) is printed out.

That is scary, meaning candidates can be proclaimed without any comparison of the tabulation being conducted!

Comelec claims that in compliance with RA 9369 it will transmit to the country, party, citizens arm, and media electronic copies of the EBs.

Problems

In addition it has a website where all EBs will be available.

There are a number of problems with this scenario:

1. The audit should be done at each canvassing center not on servers somewhere in Manila.

2. The EBs will be encrypted. If the sender changes in conspiracy, the receiver will just see unreadable information.

3. The Comelec website will definitely crash on election night and slow days after.

The best safeguard is to provide the parties, the citizens arm, and media with a PC and projector.

The PCOS machines should transmit to the Comelec canvassing server and the four PCs.

Prior to printing the official COC, a comparison should be made between the five databases and discrepancies should be reconciled.

This safeguard is not very expensive, a PC with a projector should cost less than P50,000. Let's say 7,000 sets are needed. That will only cost P350 million.

Much less than almost P5 billion being spent on 82,000 PCOS machines that will speed up the counting by 3 to 5 hours!

Let us do something to ensure honest and credible elections. And clip the voice of the people triumphs.

(The article reflects the personal opinion of the author and does not reflect the official stand of the Management Association of the Philippines. The author is president of Systems Science Consult Inc. Feedback at mqp@globelines.com.ph. For previous articles, please visit mqp.org.ph)

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Manuel A. Alcantara Jr

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INFOTECH

Smaller faster smarter

INTEL CORE

INTEL CORE INTEL vPro, a new line of processors is born.

By Raquel P Garvey and Abigail L. Ho

BUYING A NEW INTEL-BASED LAPtop or desktop? Look closely at some products and you may be able to notice significant change in the processor sticker that indicates newer, better performing, smarter, and more energy efficient 32-nanometre Intel processors.

Chips are really getting smaller. Last year's 45 nm family of processors has given way to today's groundbreaking 32 nm line—the Core i7, Core i5 and Core i3 Intel processors sold in pentium or more than 400 desktops and laptops.

Adam King, Intel's director of product marketing and business operations in Asia Pacific, said the new family of Intel processors based on the Nehalem micro architecture proves an "dramatic improvement" in Intel's previous processors represented by the Intel Core 2 Duo.

Intel's new 2010 core processors can efficiently multitask, play high definition video and 3D games, and feature smaller chipsets that lay the groundwork for thinner, slimlier, smaller and more streamlined PC designs.

According to King, the all-new 2010 Intel Core processor family is the first to integrate graphics into the processor or CPU. Intel HD Graphics has the capability to deliver HD video playback and supports multistream 3D gaming without the need for an add-on video graphics card.

Featuring the Auto Intel technology, the processors allows a desktop to adapt to the demands of the workload, saving power to the process. For example, the PC will know when it may have to boost performance for demanding computing process (like video editing and online gaming to multiple users) or use only the resources needed for not so demanding processes like playing music or typing a document.

Intel's demo, a Core i5 desktop PC (locked at 3.33 GHz) may play multi-stream online game Call of Duty without an additional video graphics card installed in the PC.

King said the new Intel processors are intended to suspend to the digital lifestyle of consumers who demand much more from their PCs—from late-level processing, number crunching, simple internet browsing and music managing.

The new Intel-powered desktops range from P30,000 below for the Core i3 PC, and P40,000 below for the Core i5.

For small businesses, servers may make or break their trade

By Paolo G. Montecillo

SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS looking for ways to gain their market shares are urged to consider investing in computer servers that promise to make operations more efficient.

Global technology giants Dell Inc. and Intel Corp. recently launched their "My First Server" campaign aimed at local small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) hoping to give them a competitive edge in their respective markets.

Internet bony data secure and organized, helping businesses run their computer more efficiently and professionally, Dell and Intel officials said in a briefing in Makati City.

A server allows businesses to have services like e-mail, internet connectivity, internal web sites, remote access, mobile device support, file and printer sharing all in a single piece of hardware, Dell Philippines country manager Barry Barzyl said.

"Having a server can make their businesses or offices run as possible especially in these trying economic times," he added.

The Dell official said its 11th Generation PowerEdge servers would properly address the needs of small businesses. Powered by Intel's Xeon 5500 series of processors, the new line of servers are powerful enough to handle the data management needs of small businesses at an affordable price.

Having servers will be especially important for businesses with mobile workforces, particularly those engaged in sales or information-gathering information.

"Employees who work from home or frequently travel definitely need a server so that employees can remotely connect to the company network and access information and resources, no matter where they are," Barzyl said.

Having servers also helps secure data since access to sensitive information can be easily restricted.

Barzyl said last year's crisis highlighted just how important it was to make sure that the means for to every aspect of a business is trimmed.

"Before the crisis, most companies did not really care about technology investments. But the hard times showed everyone when their efficiencies and inefficiencies were," he said.

Entertainment served up on sheet of smoked glass

LG ELECTRONICS (LG), A major player in the global flat panel display and audio-video devices market, announced the launch of its SL09—a full HD LED LCD TV that is almost as thin as a single sheet of stacked glass it resembles.

The TV delivers picture quality as flawless as its smooth surface.

LG's latest masterpiece uses the unique Injection Compression Molding technology and Glue Lamination to eliminate the gap between the screen and the bezel. With a depth of just 3.9cm, the SL09 is a beautiful window into a new world of home entertainment.

"The Borderless" TV is captivating ... acting as a centerpiece for any living room," said Simon Hong of LG Electronics

LG'S SL9000 LED LCD TV

Philippines. "Its refined borderless appearance sounds exceptional without the need for unsightly gables that will ruin the TV's aesthetic.

The SL09's ability to connect wirelessly to an online library of digital content is as attractive as the TV itself. Bluetooth brings music, movies and photos from compatible mobile phones directly to the big screen without cables.

While the SL09 may be a stunning shade of black on the outside, it is totally green on the inside. This TV has five distinct energy saving modes and uses up to 40 percent less power than conventional LCD TVs.

Beneath its glossy surface, LG's SL09 hides technology that produces a great picture. Its refined Incredible Speaker sounds exceptional without the need for unsightly gables that will ruin the TV's aesthetic.

The SL09's ability to connect wirelessly to an online library of digital content is as attractive as the TV itself. Bluetooth brings music, movies and photos from compatible mobile phones directly to the big screen without cables.

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Revamped Yahoo! service launched

By Daniel J. Lucas

YAHOO! HAS REVAMPED ITS homepage in a move that would it said "bring together the best of the Web with the best of Yahoo! in a single destination" for PC and mobile Internet access.

According to the Internet search giant, its new homepage will allow users to add apps—from Yahoo! or virtually any other site on the Web—and access them from their computer or mobile devices so that their favorite content, services and experiences are always readily available.

The new feature was made available recently in beta/test runs, with simultaneous roll-outs in the Philippines, Indonesia and Singapore.

In a statement, the world's second-largest search engine said the new design "represents the most significant change to the Yahoo! homepage since the company's inception."

By enabling a higher level of personalization, Yahoo! hopes that the new site would allow users to navigate the Internet in a more efficient manner. This launch is also a major milestone in the "Yahoo! Open Strategy" which seeks to mesh the Yahoo! experience with the best online content and services.

"Whether for the PC or a mobile device, Yahoo! is bringing you its simplicity and relevance to the way people experience the Web," said Yahoo! Southeast Asia's vice president and managing director Eric Mandel.

"By focusing on what people have told us they want, our new homepage is designed to help our audiences stay on top of what is going on in their world, and in the rest of the world."

Some features of the Yahoo! homepage include:

•My Favorites. People can easily choose from a dashboard of more than 30 apps to add directly to their homepage, including lots of brand content sites, popular social networking sites, and dozens of others.

•App Makers. Using technology developed by Yahoo!, people can easily create their own app on the fly by adding visual style URL of their choice.

•Trend Setter. A new snapshot of trends, including the most popular searches and hot buzz around the Web.

•PC to Mobile Sync (coming soon). People will be able to continue their Yahoo! experience on the go with a more seamless PC to mobile integration. New apps added to the Yahoo! homepage on the PC may be added to the mobile homepage.

•Scout. Bar Stop-Report-Send news and the ability to toggle the news module at the top of the page offer easier ways to access the news that matters most.

"The Filmdom application on the new Yahoo! homepage allows users quick access to their network activity stream, photos, itineraries, comments, and much more," said Friendster's global product vice president David Jones.

GSIS seen to complete migration to new IT system soon

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE System will finish migrating to its new Oracle-HP system sometime in the next few months, following its pushing of an IBM system that it says has caused a way too many problems.

Kalvem Chaudhry, Oracle Asia Pacific regional director for enterprise technology, said the migration was still ongoing as the government pension fund wanted to make sure that there would be no problems this time around.

"GSIS is working with multiple vendors, not just Oracle, so the migration is taking a bit of time. The migration should be complete in a matter few months," he told reporters.

The government pension fund late last year decided to junk its $881,882 system altogether, and opt to deploy a Hewlett-Packard Integrity Superdome Servers and an Oracle Database 11g Release 2 database management software.

"This migration process from IBM DB2 to Oracle is a major step for the GSIS to effectively IBM-DB2 related problems. This important activity will bring the GSIS closer to normalizing its operations to better serve you, GSIS members and pensioners," GSIS said in a statement posted on its official website.

GSIS last year engaged IBM in a legal and media brawl over Big Blue's alleged promises to the state firm of defective database software.

Apart from the GSIS contract, Chaudhry said Oracle also secured a deal with Metrobank Group's Philippine Savings Bank, also for the deployment of the Oracle Database 11g Release 2.

Deployment for the financial institution was likewise ongoing, he said.

He related that Oracle was currently in talks with other large enterprises in the country, which he declined to name due to confidentiality agreements, for possible deals.

In Asia Pacific, he said three of Oracle's customers were in the telecommunications and financial services sectors, many much the same as in the Philippines.

Sales via trade fairs surge

By Riza Olchondra

PHILIPPINE FOOD exporters' sales in trade fairs surged last year as participants leveraged more about their target markets, according to information from the Department of Agriculture.

In a report, Agriculture Undersecretary Bernie Fenecio Wayne said the DA participated in 15 trade fairs in 2009, helping marketers from the province of Philippines' food products in traditional and emerging markets.

Philippine sales booked in the 15 trade fairs reached $118 million, according to initial estimates. This is an increase of $71.6 percent from 2008 sales of $201 million.

For DA targets a 10-percent growth in sales every year, Wayne told the Inquirer.

"The increase in sales may be traced to a careful study of the strengths of demand in target markets such as China, Japan, United States and the Middle East prior to participation in these trade fairs," Wayne said.

"Each client trade fairs in country matches whose strong demand was felt or projected were chosen for DA participation," she said.

The DA participated in four more trade fairs in 2009 than in 2008.

It also took advantage of the growing income and buying power of consumers in China and participated in more trade fairs in that country last year.

Wayne said the department budgeted more than P100 million for the promotion of Philippine agricultural goods in traditional markets.

Hike in bank reserve requirement likely

Lenders seen ready for the move

By Michelle V. Ramos

THE COUNTRY'S BANKING sector is amenable to and prepared for an increase in the reserve requirement as the head of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

This is one of the measures that the BSP may implement this year to tighten monetary policy in view of the expected recovery of the economy.

According to the Bankers Association of the Philippines, the industry is expected to perform better in 2010 compared to the previous year and that an increase in the reserve requirement was not expected to hamper its profitability and ability to meet demand for credit.

The high level of the industry's liquidity will still allow growth in bank lending to customers and businesses even if the reserve requirement would be raised, the group said.

"If the BSP chooses to increase the reserve requirement, the industry will adjust," said Sandra Manotoc-Ik, president of the BAP. "The outlook for the industry is better this year," he added.

Manotoc-Ik, who is also president of Bank of the Philippine Islands, said the policies implemented by the BSP to help stimulate the economy had so far been effective.

The central bank is in the best position to know when a reversion of those policies is appropriate, he said.

He said the BSP had signaled its intention to withdraw some of the policies that were put in place to help consumers like effects of the turmoil.

"They are already giving out some signals and that is good because banks will not be surprised," Monteclaro said.

Potenciano Ilusorio III, president of the Association of Thrift Banks, said the industry was already expecting an increase in the reserve requirement this year. He said thrift banks were prepared for it.

"We expect that one of the things the BSP will do is to go back to the previous reserve requirement. That is already being anticipated and we don't see any problem with that," Garcia said.

In November 2008, the central bank reduced the reserve requirement from 20 to 19 percent of deposits to unfreeze the P1 trillion financial sector that eventually led to a recession in the world's biggest economy. The reserve ratio of the United States economy dragged growth in other countries and led to recessions in others.

FIRST GEN BACKS BP SOLAR CAR

First Gen president and CEO Federico R. Lopez (3rd from right) hands over a P1.5-million check to Rizalino Agcaoili (2nd from right), chair of the Philippine Solar Car Challenge Society Inc. (PSCCSI), in support of Blue, a solar-powered car designed by students and teachers of De La Salle University (DLSU). Witnessing the ceremony are PSCCSI president Henry Co (panorama left) and Bro. Armin Luistro, FSC (panorama right), DLSU president. The car-signing, which was held recently at the DLSU campus in Manila, coincided with the start of Blue's nationwide tour to create awareness about the need to develop and use clean and renewable sources of energy.

Napocor sets aside P7B for SPUG unit capex in 2010

STATE-RUN NATIONAL POWER CORP. plans to allocate P7 billion for the capital expenditure budget of its Small Power Utilities Group (SPUG) this year, according to its top official.

In an interview, Napocor president Froilan A. Tampinco said the amount would be used for the acquisition of generator sets for target SPUG areas and for its electrification measures in the barangays.

Tampinco said the P7-billion capex budget would come from long-term financing.

SPUG is Napocor's missionary electrification arm, providing electricity to remote islands and far-flung, inland barangays that are not connected to the main grid of the country.

The government, through Napocor, subsidizes the cost of power in SPUG. Subsidy amounts to about P6 billion yearly.

In particular, Napocor's SPUG projects would include the electrification of 17 barangays in Batanes and Aklan through the geothermal-solar and diesel-power projects, documents showed.

For this year, Napocor targets to acquire at least 25 of the 160-kilowatt generator sets, which will be provided to Quezon, Isabela, Aguzan, Cagayan, Palawan, Balingo, Albay, Northern, Cebu, Leyte (North), Samar, Antique, Davao del Sur, Bukid Norte and Bukid Sur, Surigao del Norte and Dinagat Islands.

The state-run firm also plans to purchase 35 of the 110-kW generator sets for Batanes, Quezon, Isabela, Cagayan, Palawan, Cebu, Leyte (South), Biliran, Samar (West), Davao del Sur, Davao del Norte and Siargao.

On top of these projects, Napocor will also pursue its rural electrification projects in Masbate.

The Napocor's SPUG currently operates 284 power-plant units with a total generating capacity of about 120 megawatts (MW). It serves 78 island grids and eight isolated grids providing electricity to 42 consumers consisting of 39 electric cooperatives and three bulk government units.

Following the presentation of most of Napocor's power generation assets and contracted capacities, Tampinco said the government would focus more of its resources on the provision of power supply to the SPUG areas, beginning this year.

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Mining still an investment draw, officials say

By Riza T. Olchondra

IN THE EYES OF MINING officials, the country's mineral reserves still hold glitter for investors.

This, even if DBP-Bilfinst, the world's largest miner, has relocated its Philippine investment to tap from mineral.

In 2007, the government announced DBP would invest up to $1 billion in the country, including the conservation of a nickel processing plant. That was when nickel prices were at record highs of $54,050 per ton.

Nickel prices, however, have fallen sharply since then. Even as prices recovered somewhat this year, DBP "sent the way of Cerro Gold Corp., Atomic Mining Inc. and Bamboo Mines Ltd. which dropped their mining interests in the Philippines in September last year.

Recession hit. Cerro Gold signed an agreement to sell its interest in Rapu-Rapu Polymetallic Project to Canada-registered Mindanao Goldfield for $7 million. That left Spain Mining Co. tending the Mancy gold mine on its own while keeping hopes up that the new principal will be able to support its much needed expansion.

British mining company Oxus Mining PLC, a gold miner listed on the London Stock Exchange, was commissioned with the potential of the gold-silver Key Tanda project of Surigao-based Mindoro Resources Ltd.

"While the district has potential, the company's resource estimate does not meet internal thresholds for investment. Consequently, the company will not be pursuing the project further," Oxus said after reviewing the "mineralization data" for Key Tanda.

Canada's Inmet Mining Corp. was wont on why it bagged off a

FEATURE

venture agreement with Oxus Corp. to do the exploration, development and mining of the Masbate gold mining project.

Only last summer, Oxus said Inmet Philippines started exploration works for the Dinapor Mancuso-Bell Aragon Gold Project ahead of schedule. Now, however, Oxus is pursuing the project with Mancuso Gold Mining and Development Co. Inc., MPSA holder of the Masbate-Bell claim.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) director Horacio Ramos said in an interview that there were other investors who might be interested in the project. Ramos declined to name.

Another MGB official said there should be other transactions "not necessarily large-scale mines," ready to push the Philippine nickel project which DBP dropped.

Another official said there was increased interest, especially from Chinese investors, to engage in mining activities in the Philippines.

Going downstream

According to MGB assistant director Edwin G. Domingo, one development that may help lure more mining capital into the Philippines is an impending mining policy change in Indonesia, a major competitor of the Philippines for foreign investment.

A pending bill in Indonesia seeks to require all mining investors in that country to include downstream operations, such as the processing of mineral products into metal, within the country's richer investment projects.

"We have gold, copper, and nickel, like Indonesia. So we stand to benefit if even that policy change[s], as investors would look for more flexible markets," Domingo said.

Indonesia is targeting $2.16 billion in investments for 2009 after drawing in $1.4 billion in 2008.

In the meantime, another official said that Chinese, Indian and Japanese investors were also looking for investment opportunities in mining.

At a mining summit in September, an official of British miner Anglo American Plc said it was looking for new copper and gold mining prospects in at least three areas, using proceeds from the sale of its shares in the Tampakan copper gold mine which Philex Mining Corp. was developing.

Many investor is seen to be generated as more projects get into production.

Nickel prospects

Not all that glitters is gold, even under more favorable conditions.

An MGB official said that nickel projects might be particularly active in 2010 as recovering prices of the metal signal good margins for miners.

There may be at least three developments in nickel mining in the Philippines by next year, he said.

Nickel prices have improved last year to $17,950 per ton from $8,800 per ton at the end of 2008.

Copper, used in energy infrastructure and construction, recently traded at around $6,500 per ton.

Gold prices are hovering around $1,300 per ounce as demand for the yellow metal, viewed as safe investment, remains high.

"The key to mining is low cost. That's where the Philippines has an advantage—in quality, low-cost projects," Benguet Mining Ltd. company CEO Nisbet O. Ciasquez said.

Ifad earmarks $73M for 3 projects in RP

By Amy R. Remo

ROME-BASED INTERNATIONAL Fund for Agricultural Development (Ifad) plans to allocate some $73 million for three proposed projects to assist coastal resource management, agribusiness and upland developments in the country.

According to project documents, the amount represents Ifad's share in the cost of the three proposed programs, which are scheduled for implementation from 2011 to 2014.

Sonia T.R. Jalla, Ifad country manager for Asia and the Pacific, said these projects were the Integrated Natural Resources and Environmental Management Programme (Inrem), National Agricultural Value-chain Development Programme (Pandayan), and Rural Conservation, Rehabilitation and Value-Chain Development Project (CR-MVCP).

Jalla said the Inrem would address the "dual goals of poverty reduction and sustainable conservation, rehabilitation and protection in selected critical watersheds."

"Inrem will arrest the degradation, rehabilitate and conserve the critical watersheds, proactively respond to climate change vulnerabilities and introduce integrated eco-systems management approaches. Growth by improving the livelihoods of marginalized communities," he explained.

Ifad is expected to contribute some $30 million in loans for the program, which will cost about $158 million. The balance will be collected by the donor, Development Bank, the Philippine government and concerned local governments.

Activities under this program would include community watershed conservation, forest management and upland forestry development; agriculture and agribusiness development, and rural infrastructure development.

Also in the pipeline is the Pandayan, which will "support agricultural value chains and entrepreneurship by restructuring the smallholder sector and building the capacity of the various actors along the chain, linking producers to markets and public-private partnerships and supporting policy dialogues."

The program will cost about $40 million, of which $28 million will be provided by Ifad.

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LNG plant set

By Amy R. Remo

HONG KONG-BASED Energy World Corporation Ltd. has secured permits and the nod to proceed with a 300-megawatt (MW) liquefied natural gas and combined-cycle gas turbine in Pagbilao, Quezon, according to the Department of Energy.

Jesus Tinsong, director for the DOE energy policy and planning bureau, said the proposed project would be implemented in stages, starting with a 150-megawatt plant, which will be later ramped up to 300 MW.

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LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

New gallery provides art scholarships

ANTON del Castillo, Charlie Cojuangco and Brendale Tadeo

By Walter Ang
Contributor

CARLOS "CHARLIE" Cojuangco's Negros Occidental Visual Arts (Nova) Gallery recently staged a pre-inaugural exhibit for the benefit "Art On The Verge," a Fine Arts scholarship fund.

The former booth dancer representative of Negros Occidental and current head of the Negros Occidental Football Association has been collecting art for the past fourteen years, mainly paintings. He has a fondness for works by Charlie Co as well as artists from Negros Occidental. Some of his prized pieces are Antipas Delotavo's Bye-guard oil on canvas "Incubus Dove" and Nono Garcia's award-winning mixed media "Sea-Saw."

From personal interest, his passion has grown into

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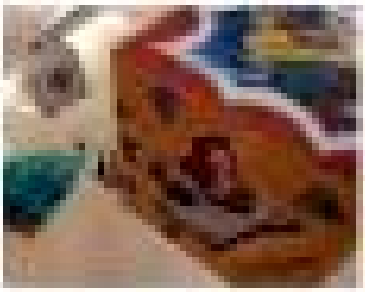
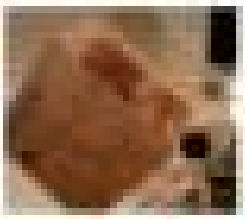
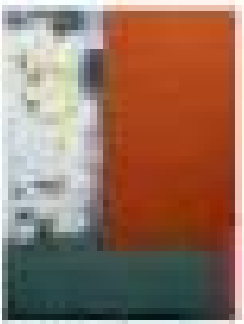




Carlo Maggi's golden abstracts



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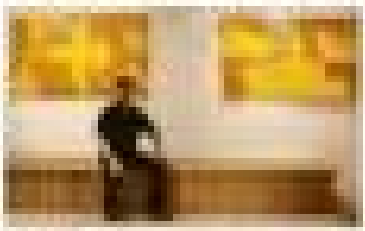

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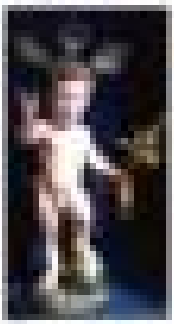
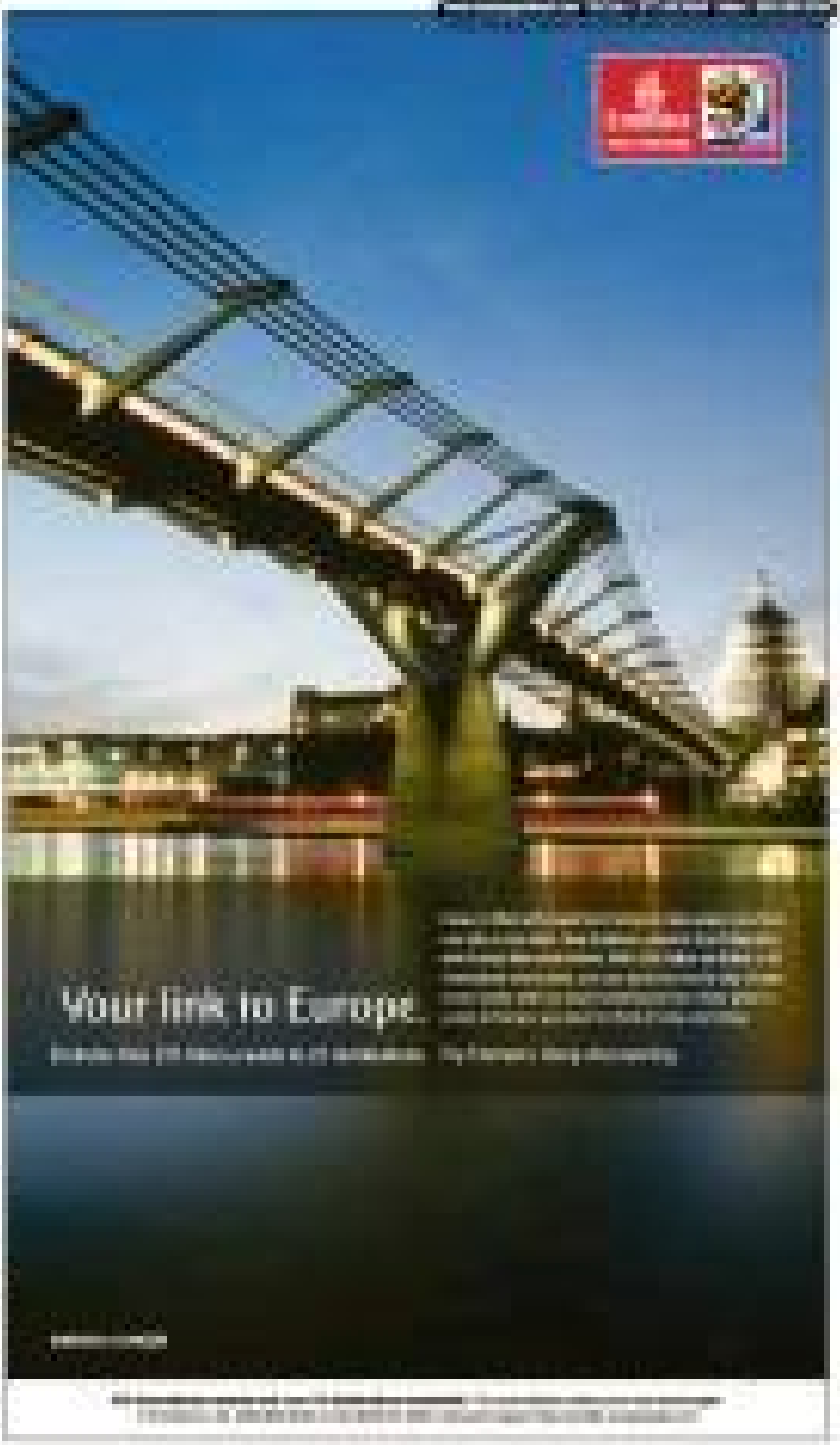
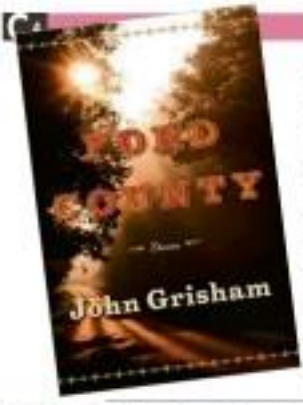
He's Child, He's Arnold: images on exhibit at Governors Square Mall







Grisham's first short-story collection exerts a pull on reader

The bite-size small-town tales from 'The Firm' author are diverting if a little too brief

By Basil S. De Vera

IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT John Grisham likes to do, it's trying something new; a first-person if unpredictable quality in a best-selling author. Aside from penning short-yapping courtroom dramas (everything from "The Firm" to "The Associate"), Grisham has also written nonfiction (the impressive "The Innocent Man"), literary semi-autobiography (the even better "A Painted House") and even spy fiction (the awful "The Broker"), to various degrees of success. He has even found time to successfully do some lawyering in his spare time.

But his 27th book, Grisham's new homecoming "Ford County: Stories" (Doubleday, New York, 2009; 305 pages), his first collection of short stories, all linked by its locale: the fictional Mississippi town of Clanton, which famously has only 11 lawyers and 30,000 inhabitants but enough interlocked narratives in 10 of this book—or maybe more. Not for nothing is the title county the same one where "A Time to Kill," Grisham's first book, was set.

The stories stories in "Ford County" are, on the surface, very similar, ordinarily Spartan incidents of mid-Southern interest: the small, small people (here for diffuse) such as the doomed love night blossoming attempt of "Blood Ethics," the fateful and ill-fated high links of "Casino," the tale-sort of death over poison rituals in "Fetching Raymond," the wayward phone call changes everything in "Fall Price," an unsuspecting lawyer's strangest night in "All-Star Picnic" and the surprisingly suspenseful evening home administration effort in "Quite Heroic."

Grisham's stories are deceptively uncomplicated, so uncluttered to as to seem simplistic, but each one is loaded, literally and figuratively, "God Country" boasts of many things swimming right under the stories' surfaces: sex, money, divorce, race, crime and greed, among others. The stories seem to run at the same, relaxed pace but also search to embrace to the finish, enough to take our reader along for the ride. Simple as the stories are, you will still want to see how they end. If anything, the stories come to an end a bit too easily. Grisham succeeds in piquing the readers' interests but then the stories—and "Ford County" the book—ends.

The best story in the bunch is the final piece, "Fancy Joey," which details the unsolicited abuse return of one of Clanton's most reviled past inhabitants and the friendship he builds with an elderly black woman. The story, which works at the direction of slow fuses, deals with how Grisham, or any small town in town, deals with the two things that electrify in death and scandal.

"I'm not sure," the titular protagonist of the story says, "I've seen a lot of death socially, been to more than my share of memorials. I couldn't stand the thought of being buried in a cold mausoleum in a cemetery city. Maybe it's just the heartburn doing. Or all come home eventually."

What really comes home, in every story, is the irresistible power of story in a small town in all its riotous Rabbit gossip, respect, documentary, family laureates and civil war memories. The stories exert an irresistible pull on everyone around them. This is what Grisham harnesses and wants. In "Ford County," Grisham returns to the scene of his First Journey Essay and finds new ground to mine. Readers hope the stories will unravel into fuller, more crystalized forms in the hit are. Imagine a novel featuring these newly unpacked but unmistakable characters—and characters they all are. It's a safe bet John Grisham will somehow find the time to do it.

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'Pinoy Umami' is now available in major bookstores

THE COFFEE-TABLE BOOK "PINOY Umami: The Heart of Philippine Cuisine" is now available in Seafood Book, Hazi, PowerBooks and Fully Booked.

The book, which is clearly for everyone who loves to eat and loves Philippine cuisine, documents the history, cultural heritage and diversity of the many regions of Philippine cuisine.

It boasts a collection of essays by award-winning Filipino writers and culinary experts and delves into the culture and history of Philippine cuisine.

Bundled together with the coffee-table book is the recipe book "Pinoy Umami Recipes," which contains 100 recipes with classic standards like sizzling sisig to regional delicacies like bicol.

As Restaurant's 110th year offering is Filipinone, "Pinoy Umami: The Heart of Philippine Cuisine" is a testament to the company's commitment to give more than a good for the body as well as the mind.

LIFESTYLE Arts&Books

(Musical) youth on parade

By Amalia Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

YOUTHFUL MUSICIANS reaching out to their fellow youths.

This, in brief, may well sum up "Sinfonietas Clandestinas Españolas...piano de conciertos," a free concert sponsored by the Spanish Program for Cultural Cooperation under the Spanish Embassy and Instituto Cervantes. The concert will be staged at the Meralco Theater on Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m.

The event was announced at a recent press conference at the Presidential Suite of the Manila Peninsula.

To begin, the main performer is crossover pianist Angelo Ortiz, 25, winner of the World Championship of Performing Arts held in Hollywood, USA. He will be accompanied by Sunda 31, a mixed symphonic orchestra conducted by Michael Jacinto, whose members are mostly in their late teens. In fact, the youngest performer for that evening will be flutist Angelic Marie Mookas, 11. There's a flutist who's only eight, but he will not be performing on Jan 30.

Other guest performers are tenor saxophonist Michael Young ("who is also young," quipped Ortiz), and classical guitarists Paolo Mendoza and Lowel Lubio. Thus, the concert is being promoted in the schools and among the youth sectors "lest else the masters," Ortiz hastened to add.

In keeping with the theme, the lights and stage setup will be modern, to appeal to the target audience.

The repertoire consists of variations of Spanish beehoven like "Suite Andaluza," "Suite Española," "Carmen Suite 1" (by the Frenchman Bizet but with a Spanish flavor)

ANGELO Ortiz and Jose Rodriguez, director of Instituto Cervantes

ARMATO
Cassals

Performing artists give tips on how to cope with crisis

By Pablo A. Tariman
Contributor

DURING THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL CRISIS started, artists' compensations were cut and concerts cancelled. Audience assessdance dipped, corporate sponsorships came to a halt, opera companies closed or severely cut down their season offerings. Suddenly, there were more jobless artists.

In Manila, many concerts were cancelled, particularly after the typhoons and floods. But Filipino artists contributed to the relief effort; they looked beyond themselves to help others.

MICHIEL Kevin Jones and Agustin Maruri

Jones & Maruri, a must-see live cello-guitar concert experience, performs tonight

THE EMBASSY OF SPAIN WITH THE Instituto Cervantes de Manila will present the world-renowned cello-guitar duo, Jones & Maruri, tonight (Jan. 14) at 8 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium in SGBC Plaza, Makati. Entrance to this concert is free, first come, first served.

Believed to be the only established cello-guitar duo in the world, British cellist Michael Kevin Jones and Spanish guitarist Agustin Maruri are largely responsible for bringing the charm and timeless quality of the cello and guitar into the musical mainstream and making it accessible to a larger audience.

Formed in Madrid in 1995, Jones & Maruri have played concerts in Europe, the Americas, Asia and Australia. Their first US tour was in 1995, which included concerts in New York and 31 Augustine Music duets. They have performed each year in the US, giving recitals in New York, Chicago, Washington DC and Los

Performing artists give tips on how to cope with crisis

From page B1

"I would like to believe that this recession can make it a blessing in disguise," says cellist Nicanor Lava. "It has been the norm to just fully equate happiness with the pursuit of material gains. Musicians in general and musicians in particular, for some, material gains could relate enormously to happiness, but for it to be the end-all and be-all is a dead-end road to take."

Pianist Ray Gawil, also head of the NCCA Music Grants, did his part. "To help other people cope, I am lowering the prices of my goods in the [2014] store. I also do research on inexpensive but good quality musical instruments from China. Of course, I have another non-music job that I currently on. Whatever can cope by simple being in good shape as instrumentalists. The crisis will be over someday and being competitive will always be an issue, critical or not."

Violinist Joel Solares doesn't feel the economic crunch. "I guess it's because my line of work in the performing arts is not directly dependent on economic conditions but on knowledge, awareness and level of education of our society, with regard support for artists and artistic institutions."

Solares has assumed a new job as orchestra manager of the Manila Symphony Orchestra and he admits the company is struggling to make both ends meet. "I like to think it's a case of 'nowhere to go but up' for us. In our country, appreciation and support of arts have increased now, but they come to think of it, the arts were never there priorities. On the other hand, I think musicians should get some training in management or finance and not to be dependent on a single investment source alone. We must be resourceful and create opportunities or runs in other ways. In MSO, we are training some of the musicians who originally were just playing in the orchestra to also learn how to teach and run music studio. We are expanding our product not just through sponsorship of concerts but also through recordings. Whether there is an economic crisis or not, people will look for music, not simply as entertainment or amusement, but as a way for self-expression, for personal growth, and it is also perceived as a good way of training many skills among children."

Violinist and MSO concertmaster Gina Medina says she love music too much to be happy with what she has and to double one's effort to be good even in times of crisis. "We at the MSO always remind ourselves that we are being paid millions even if we aren't. So we play as through we got hugely paid. Musicians from also both to additions, but we don't allow the hard times to get to us artistically. We even perform for free. When we receive our fees, we actually spend more than what we are paid. But that's why we're artists. We derive joy and satisfaction from making music and doing something beautiful."

VIOLINIST and MSO concertmaster Gina Medina

SOPRANO Rachelle Gonzalez

Quirk

Tony Australia, Silsay-based Filipino violinist, conductor and music teacher Julius Quirk says the economic downturn has affected the orchestra but not his teaching profession. Orchestra performances have been cancelled and there are only eight from the usual 15 performances this season. "But the artistic students have multiplied. Plus I have lost in performances is made up threefold with my studio work."

He looks at the situation than: "There is no clear solution as to how musicians should cope. Those who are entrenched with good paying positions should be grateful, but the musicians who rely on performances and are affected should switch gears to others less as music how small it is in terms of monetary compensation."

Most performing artists think musicians are actually good at dealing with crisis of all kinds.

Fernando, Geraldine

Andrew Fernando—who will perform as the Philadelfo Jan. 22 says Rachelle Gonzalez and Raul Sunico—pianist and vocal musicians are inherently well-equipped to cope with crisis by virtue of the discipline that goes into their profession.

"That enables them to think and work hard through crisis in whatever shape or form," Fernando says. "The lesson I have learned from all this is to focus more on music and less on career goals. We have a following in the countries in the US that allowed the arts wealthy. I had my share of shows getting canceled last year due to budget cuts or even closing of companies. You can't get angry in situations like that. Nobody deserves shows getting cancelled. We just have to be more understanding."

Gonzalez agrees: "Yes, we are good at surviving a crisis because we are so used to it, especially in our country. But seriously, you cannot be a musician without the skill and strength to cope with the artistic pressures brought about by our work."

For OCP artistic director and UST Conservatory Dean Raul Sunico, the best way to cope with crisis is to really busy with musical-minded individuals.

"I am very much fulfilled with what I am doing and satisfied with the results that have so far been generated," Sunico says. "Of course, we have to handle many things as so far as finances and policy-making are concerned."

As a performer, Sunico has performed lately in Poland and Szolcholovakia in Germany, recital and concerto in New York in December in addition to putting up some shows for the UST ["Love Unspoken" in the OCP Jan. 30-31, and "Sampung Dalit" on 9th. 23). He has also kept busy by coordinating the artistic affairs of OCP, one of doing landmark projects for DepEd, teaching (piano and summer) and recording.

On the whole, Sunico's activities have been a combination of administering, performing, teaching, recording, arts promoting and notebook writing. "I expect my work to continue this way for the coming year," he adds.

So, do artists actually cope better than other professionals?

Let me leave what you think by emailing me at musicnewsreviews@yahoo.com.

The Jan. 22 concert of Reel Series, Rachelle Gonzalez and Andrew Fernando at the Philadelfo Theater is set at 7:30 p.m., but it is earlier announced. Call 0917.7377345 or 4650823.

(Musical) youth on parade

From page D1

and popular genres arias like Malagueña, Granadina, Arrivedi, Tango, Cucurucu, Cucurucu and Concierto de la mujer.

"The artists will interpret works by all the major Spanish composers," said Ana'R. Rodriguez, director of Instituto Cervantes Manila. "They will respect the music but will make it appear as fiddle through variations. It's a real challenge."

Rodriguez added that from training to send themselves of a similar cultural and historical great under this program of the Spanish Embassy and Instituto Cervantes may do so from March to June this year. He also used he endorsed by a university and, of course, the proposal must have something to do with Spanish culture.

And the program is for young and old. "It's for everybody," Rodriguez pointed out. "There is no age limit. Anybody can apply. And all auditions must be free, as our maestro insists everybody."

Jones & Maruri, a must-see ...

From page D1

Angeles and at festivals in the US, Cuba and Venezuela, among others.

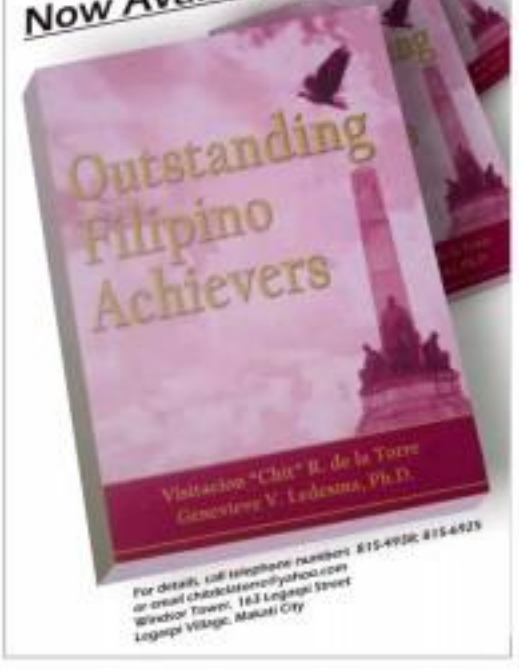
They have also initiated a search into original Iberian repertoire that led to the discoveries of many significant works by unknown 18th-century composers such as Jaime Facorro, Jon Call, Theatre Midnight and Friedrich Bermann—and world premier recordings of them. As a result, Maruri has received scholarships and research for his ongoing work as a musicologist. At the same time, their exercise has inspired many compositions from composers such as Pedro Garcia, Francisco Nilll, Rob Mueller, Malcolm Hamlett, José María Sánchez-Verdú, Dave Hennigan, Paul Cohen and Lucinda Rhodes.

Their recording "Original Music for Cello and Guitar" stayed in the Top 10 classical chart in Hong Kong for one year.

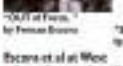
Due to the success in East Asia, they were invited to record a CD of traditional Chinese melodies for the Taiwanese record label Shiyuan.

In 2009, Jones and Maruri recorded for the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York the Duo Concerto of Spain, a collection of Spanish romantic melodies from the 19th century performing on instruments from the museum's collection. In 2010, they released their latest recording together, "Don Quijote y Dulcinea," and toured South America and the Middle East.

Following their debut tour in Japan and other Asian countries in 2007, the duo has been invited to perform at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, playing concerts in the Forbidden City concert hall, as well as in Shanghai and other cities in the People's Republic of China.



Visual Arts



"OUT of Form," by Fernan Ecarma

"SELF [SERIES]," by Cris Villanueva Jr.

Ecarma et al at West

Fernan Ecarma's "Out of Form" opens on Jan. 17in West Gallery (4338rd Avenue, Quezon City; call 4510008 or 4510021; visit www.westgallery.org). Social issues and headline-grabbing problems in our society inspired Ecarma's 16 (!) pieces in exhibition, one which he has put together especially for 16 Bis Fierce, and uses mixed materials to make all the pieces appear as one large work.

Also at West Gallery is "2013: The Year the Make Contact," a group exhibit by Ronald Achacoso, Alex Aquilo, Raelene Aquino, Bella Bautista, Dom Bayas, Raul Rodriguez, Omar Tabuena and Cris Villanueva Jr. runs from Jan. 19 to Feb. 8. The exhibit is their first big all-group show, which began with 2007's "Bridal to Bridesmaid" and 2009's "Fierce" that meditates on close encounters and all its dramatic permutations: romance and emotion, contact and disconnect, presence and isolation.

Cagaoila, Dy in joint show

Ongoing at Silverlens Gallery is Jose Cagaoila and Christine Dy's "Stereo 1." The first joint show series showcasing Cagaoila's edgy photographs and Dy's large-scale text-to-threads drawings. In Stereo 1, Cagaoila and Dy become one as both subscribe to artistic exchange and collaborate. "Stereoscopic" describes mutual-based Raymond De Jesus, the source of Revelino's name. Silverlens is at 2F WMC Bldg. 6, 2322 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati. Call 8100161, 817 0810/13, e-mail inquiries@silverlensgallery.com.

"S. 2009"

Manaa, Olazo, Lee at Manila Contemporary

Diane Rocio, Jonathan Richard Rosso-Lee are featured in the Philippines at Manila Contemporary. Diane Rocio is a linguistic-based painter whose works suggest an indefinable, hidden life within the object, and by extension, suggest the human relationship to objects around us. The only statement meaning in objects and their by objects affect our psychological and emotional state. Olazo recognized for the profundity of his investigations into the fine arts of art making and its meaning. Lee unleashes a gamut of extraordinary materials that battle on dark, subconscious instruments enhanced of the imagination, homage to light. The exhibit's open weekend and will run for two weeks. Their shows run until Jan. 31. Manila Contemporary is at 2314 Pasong Tamo Extension, Brgy. Magallanes. Call 8847328 or e-mail manilacontemporary@gmail.com.

"AMG Drawing Bi-dir"

Mallari at Big & Small

Adrian Mallari presents his paintings in his first solo exhibition "Amore." The artist's UNDEF opening will be on Jan. 30, at Mendez Bay & Small Art Gallery (4/F SM Megamall Bldg. A, Mandaluyong; call 2082540 or 2917 6482/83). The show is on view until Feb. 15.

"HOLY Face"

Noted Dutch pianist performs with PPO

THE CULTURAL CENTER OF THE Philippines (CCP) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands present noted Dutch-born pianist Siet Siang Wong in a special concert with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra (PPO) on Jan. 23, 8 p.m., at the CCP's Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo (Main Theater). The concert is under the baton of Maestro Herminigildo Rivera.

SIET SIANG WONG

Dubbed "A Touch of Dutch," the program includes two piano concertos of Franz Joseph Haydn's Piano Concerto in D Major, Hob. XVIII:11 and Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano Concerto No. 3 in C Minor, Op. 37.

Described by the Swiss newspaper Neue Zurcher Zeitung as a "subtle painter of sound," the Dutch-born pianist Siet Siang Wong has been awarded numerous prizes to become an internationally-sought soloist, chamber musician and accompanist. Since his debut at age 12 with the Dutch Radio Orchestra, he has performed in many parts of the world. Among the highlights of his career have been concerts with top conducting conductors like Pierre Boulez, Howard Griffiths, Vittorio Negri and many others. He recordings of Chopin, Mozart, Schumann ("Carnival") and Sebastian's Piano Concerto, and Beethoven's Piano Concertos Nos. 4 (Piano Arrangement of the Violin Concerto) were honored with the Swiss Classical Highlight Award.

Since 2002, Wong has taught at the Zurich University of the Arts. He holds master classes in Switzerland and abroad, and is among the esteemed circle of Steinway and Sons artists. He makes his home in Switzerland today.

Ticket prices are P800 for Orchestra Center and P500 for Orchestra Side/ CCP tel. 832-3704 302-1725 loc. 1109 or 1102. Ticketnet(891-9999).

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Remembering great moments at CCP

By Nikki Arig
Contributor

THIS SEPTEMBER, THE Cultural Center of the Philippines concludes its nine-month long 40th anniversary celebration. With its thrust on a remembrance of its past 40 years, I was inspired to take a look back at the many shows and events I've seen and experienced there.

While I am not old enough to remember all 40 years of the CCP's past (my parents weren't even married and probably didn't even know each other yet when it opened to the public in 1969), I admit I'm old enough to have seen more than a decade or two's worth of shows there.

I admit I'm old enough to have seen more than a decade or two's worth of shows

When I was still in grade school, I didn't know this huge edifice along Roxas Boulevard was supposed to be an important cultural institution. My family and I'd occasionally ended up inside the CCP's Main Theater for school foundation anniversary shows or twofolds and variety shows staged by cultural troupes from abroad (countless big Chinese acrobats were always fun to watch).

Sessions of the ministries of Filipinos who ended up in a little Place Bird musical called "Miss Despina," by the late '90s I had started developing a vigorous interest in plays and musicals. I saved up my allowances (said as the years passed, my salary) and would beg study (nap to the CCP to catch the same shows.

Plays

In 1998, I was visiting Fil-Am theater group Red Theater Company's staging of "Flipside." It centered around three transplanted Filipinos in America across three generations and their conflicting notions of identity, home and family. The show made a deep impact on me with its story, message and staging.

As a Chinese-Filipino myself to say early 20s, I related to the characters' issues of displacement and questioning roles at crossroads. Seeing three identities, the script [illegible] Ralph Peña was just flat-out hilarious.

I also saw works by Filipino playwrights and world classics in Filipino translations in all sorts of stagings in all three major theaters: the Main Theater (Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo); the Little Theater (Tanghalang Aurelio Tolentino); and my favorite performance space even to this day, the intimate basement Studio Theater (Tanghalang Ibong Adarna).

I remember Mahen Jacob's "Sinasamyan ng Kerosene," with Eric Gutz's hyperreal gastronomic office set design, complete with worn out arrows and tattered venetian blinds, and actor BJ Leyran's nuanced characterization of an office messenger. I remember "Ang Tiko ni Jennifer Hilo" directed by Lenny Pedilla, with actor Joey Paras' claustrophobic head losing flung about the stage (and him eating a toothpick). I remember Herbert Go's staging of "Wanna Learn Dem Likkers," his brilliant adaptation of Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers set to Tondo, using pidgin Tondo-speak mixed with Bikolano from's translation.

I remember "Lagwang Ligaw," (Shakespeare's "Love's Labor's Lost") whose set designer Irma Gonzales filled the Little Theater stage with grass from apron (edge of the stage) to cyclo. I remember "Insang," director Lenny Dobles Leaño transformed the studio Theater into a real-life squatter's area, and whose female leads Malou Jo Guevara and Shandy Gayo blessed their souls into audiences' minds with their powerhouse confrontation scenes.

Other companies

Of course, Tanghalang Pilipino was not the only company whose productions I watched. I remember Teatrong Asamico as Shakespeare's King Lear. I remember "Lucernas," the musical version of Rick Geopfel's "Werewolf of Ati" as Filipino," with Celeste Legaspi and Rachel Alejandro as the two sisters singing vintage about wanting to cuddle cats. I remember the hilarious play we were of the cult-classic camp-fest movie "Temptation Island," featuring male actors doing the four female lead roles.

I remember one festival of the Philippine High School for the Arts that featured "PEAR" (Branson's Universal Robots) and "Nag Ebos," a dazzling translation of Shakespeare's "The Tempest" by Rudy Mea featuring Hayes Gabaet-Ilo as Prospero (instead of a male Prospero, I remember the very first Virgin Labfest in 2005, with Lou Veloso and his pitch-perfect comic timing in "Gaspar at Vivorica").

Dance

I tried exploring the world of dance and ballet, too: "Swan Lake" with Lisa Macuja, Ballet Philippines' "Noche" – the jaw-dropping opening moments of BP's "Carmina Burana" when, with five thunderous drumroll and classical note, the lights went up on fractional Arriya for Theater Design Salvador Bernal's dramatic multi-level diagonal backdrop veiled in fog, and the dancers glided on to the stage – all at the same time. A spine-tingling, gasp-inducing moment I will never forget.

Not just shows

And yes, that famous musical "Miss Saigon," staged in at Main Theater in 2001. Other productions by foreign groups that I recall include the UK's Watermill Theater doing Shakespeare's "Comedy of Errors" with an all-male cast. I also remember attending UP alumnus that performed Shakespeare's "Macbeth," and that's when I confirmed that just because you come from the same country as Shakespeare, it doesn't mean you can automatically stage his works effortlessly. More recently, Taiwan's Cloud Gate Dance Company performed at the Main Theater and filled up the stage with ankle-deep water!

Obviously, this indulgent little inventory of memories is not nearly enough to cover the many productions, events, lectures, workshops, exhibits and whatnot (including dinners, both catered and otherwise) that I have had the privilege and pleasure of experiencing at the CCP.

But the short trip down memory lane was fun. Hopefully other visitors of the CCP, whether hardcore regulars or the fleetingly sporadic, will also be inspired to do some reminiscing of their own. Happy 40th anniversary, CCP!

E-mail the author at wellarig@yahoo.com.

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"Night Voyage"

"Past, Present and Future"

Foundation promotes art of indigenous people

By Yiyo Hurd
Contributor

MY AIM WAS TO CREATE A PLATFORM for storytelling and culture," says Imelda Bautista (Ivel) Gilbuky, founder of the Baliuanta Art Foundation, established in 2003 to promote the talent and creativity of indigenous artists.

"The Foundation was set up in order to encourage the artists to continue creating," Gilbuky says, "to show them that there are is appreciated and needed in the community, since, how would their stories get told, how would the life and culture of their ancestors get passed on if it is not for the artists who are courageous enough to tell their stories?"

During the group's seventh exhibit exhibit, titled "Kamalyan" (a Tagbanwa Org. Gilbuky chanted) the artists for "The courage to put their art up on the walls for everyone to see, risking the possibility that someone will not like what they've created." He commended them for not only their talent but also their bravery in telling their personal stories and the stories of their ancestors.

The exhibition's title, "Kamalyan," which means "awakening," exemplifies the mission of the Baliuanta Art Foundation's mission: to value Filipino expressions on the traditions of indigenous people. To forget them would mean to sever one's self from one's history and from one's self.

The exhibit showed artworks from the Agta, Tabang, Tumawa, Tadtaga and Blaan, under such themes as Hinalog (Inheritance); Lanawan (Heavens); and Ibag (engaging dance).

"Pregnant Woman," by Mitchel Angelo B. Marilli from Cagayan province, depicted the rituals and folk practices governing childbirth, in her community, it is taboo for the expectant mother to walk in sin, step on eight, lend neighbors matches and charcoal, or allow visitors to stand by the doorway.

With the help of the trained midwife, the expectant mother goes through traditional folk practices—the placenta and the umbilical cord are dried off with care, while a pair of scissors, a pouch of salt and a rosary are placed in the baby's crib to ward off witches and evil spirits.

"Ritual," by Edson Agarap Abadilla, from the Bunay community of Ipug, Gagayan depicted the Cabuda Rituals of perpetual celibacy devised by the ancient herdsmen, providing guidance from luminous death.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Lira Emerie G. Velarde

Madonna gives $250,000 to Haiti

NEW YORK—MADONNA HAS DONATED $250,000 to help the people of quake-stricken Haiti—and she is urging her fans and friends to do the same. The pop queen said Friday in a statement that her prayers are with the people of Haiti. She is asking friends and fans around the world "to join me online, [help] ... in any way you can." She says she donated to the Kaye Ui Health, a longtime health care provider there. AP

Male rape: New director opens a Pandora's box

Debut film tackles taboo topic in Pinoy macho society

By Reynold Sun Diego Jr.

BAPTISM OF FIRE.

That, in a nutshell, is how debuting filmmaker Mark Meril's fearless' depiction of the sinking of his movie "Mahal" which opens at indie films Robinsons Galleria today.

More accurately, he likened it to "opening Pandora's box."

For starters, the film's story touches male rape, considered taboo especially in the Philippines where machismo still reigns.

He explained that the film is based on the true-life stories of overseas Filipino workers, all men who were raped abroad.

It's a composite narrative, he said, but one particular story stood out and pushed him to make the film. "While doing research and interviews, I met someone whose best friend was raped in Dubai."

The interview changed the route, he learned.

PAGE E3

Jollibee 39ers:

Deliciously filling rice meals that fit your budget

After the Holiday shopping sprees that left a dent in most people's pockets, it is but natural for many to look for ways to wisely spend their hard-earned money when eating out. The good news is you can still enjoy an affordable yet deliciously filling rice meal as Jollibee brings back its popular 39ers offering! With two new variants, the Jollibee 39ers will satisfy your appetite for sulit sarap rice meals for only P39.

The new Beef with Mushrooms, with a hefty serving of delicious strips of beef complemented with mushrooms that is just perfect with steamed rice will surely be a hit among office workers and students alike. While your favorite 39ers meal gets even better with the 5-pc. Shanghai rolls with rice, with 1-piece added to your crispy-sarap shanghai rolls for a tasty and satisfying fare. Just add P10, and you can get a regular softdrink to go with those rice meals. With the Jollibee 39ers, you can still enjoy eating out as often as you like with officemates and friends without worrying about your budget.

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2 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
4 AVATAR
5 SHERLOCK HOLMES
6 DAYBREAKERS
7 THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT

MALL OF ASIA
1 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 3
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 SPY NEXT DOOR
4 AVATAR
5 DAYBREAKERS
6 THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT
7 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

MEGAMALL
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
4 DAYBREAKERS
5 AVATAR
6 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7 THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT
8 THE REBOUND

MARILAO
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
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3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
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6 SHERLOCK HOLMES
7 THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT

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4 SPY NEXT DOOR
5 AVATAR
6 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
8 DAYBREAKERS
9 THE REBOUND

CITY SAN LAZARO
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3 SPY NEXT DOOR
4 DAYBREAKERS
5 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
6 AVATAR
7 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
8 BRIDE WITH A WHITE BALL 2
9 PREDATOR
10 AVATAR
11 THE REBOUND

CITY SOL MESA
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
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3 AVATAR
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6 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
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8 THE REBOUND

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3 SHERLOCK HOLMES
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MARIKINA
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
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VALENZUELA
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CITY ROXAS
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CITY DIGOS
1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
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4 AVATAR
5 DAYBREAKERS
6 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
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8 THE REBOUND

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CITY PARKMALL
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 3
4 AVATAR
5 SHERLOCK HOLMES
6 DAYBREAKERS
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CITY LIPA
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
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CITY LUCENA
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
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CITY STA. ROSA
1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
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CITY MARILAO
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CITY SAN LAZARO
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5 DAYBREAKERS
6 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
8 THE REBOUND

CITY BACOOR
1 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 AVATAR
4 SPY NEXT DOOR
5 DAYBREAKERS
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
7 THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT

CITY STA. ROSA
1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
2 SPY NEXT DOOR
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 3
4 AVATAR
5 DAYBREAKERS
6 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
8 THE REBOUND

CITY MARILAO
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 3
4 AVATAR
5 DAYBREAKERS
6 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
8 THE REBOUND

CITY SAN LAZARO
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 3
4 AVATAR
5 DAYBREAKERS
6 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
8 THE REBOUND

CITY BACOOR
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 SHERLOCK HOLMES
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
5 AVATAR
6 THE VAMPIRE'S ASSISTANT

visayas • mindanao

CITY BANILAD
1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
2 SPY NEXT DOOR
3 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 3
4 SPY NEXT DOOR
5 DAYBREAKERS
6 AVATAR
7 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
9 THE REBOUND

CITY CEBU
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 3
3 SHERLOCK HOLMES
4 AVATAR
5 DAYBREAKERS
6 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
7 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
8 THE REBOUND

CITY SUBLIC
1 PREDATOR
2 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 NEW MOON
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS 3
5 AVATAR
6 SHERLOCK HOLMES
7 SPY NEXT DOOR

CAGAYAN DE ORO
1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
2 SPY NEXT DOOR
3 AVATAR
4 DAYBREAKERS
5 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
6 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
7 THE REBOUND

CITY BACOLOD
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 AVATAR
4 DAYBREAKERS
5 LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
6 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
7 THE REBOUND

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GALLERIA
1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
3 DAYBREAKERS
4 AVATAR
5 SPY NEXT DOOR
6 AVATAR (Digital 3D)
7 twinSpire PUNTOD
8 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
9 CHUBCHASER
10 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON

MANILA
1 DAYBREAKERS
2 SPY NEXT DOOR
3 SHERLOCK HOLMES
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
5 AVATAR
6 CHUBCHASER
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

METRO EAST
1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
3 SPY NEXT DOOR
4 DAYBREAKERS
5 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
6 AVATAR
7 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
8 THE REBOUND

HOVALICHES
1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
2 SPY NEXT DOOR
3 DAYBREAKERS
4 AVATAR

FORUM ROBINSONS
1 SHERLOCK HOLMES
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
3 SPY NEXT DOOR
4 DAYBREAKERS

STA. ROSA
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 AVATAR
3 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4 BAD LIEUTENANT

LIPA
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 AVATAR
3 ANG PANDAY
4 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE

DASMARIÑAS
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 ANG PANDAY
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL

STARMILLS
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 AVATAR
4 TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON
5 SHERLOCK HOLMES
6 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL

IMUS
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
3 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
4 AVATAR

ANGELES
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 PREDATOR
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL

TACLOBAN
1 ZOMBIELAND
2 BAD LIEUTENANT
3 AVATAR

DUMAGUETE
1 ZOMBIELAND
2 BAD LIEUTENANT
3 AVATAR

BACOLOD
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
3 SHERLOCK HOLMES
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
5 AMELIA
6 AVATAR

ILOILO
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 SHERLOCK HOLMES
3 AVATAR
4 ALVIN & THE CHIPMUNKS: THE SQUEAKQUEL
5 I LOVE YOU, GOODBYE
6 BAD LIEUTENANT

GENSAN
1 SPY NEXT DOOR
2 ZOMBIELAND
3 AVATAR
4 HURT LOCKER / UNIVERSAL SOLDIER

ILOCOS NORTE (NOW OPEN!)
1 PARANORMAL ACTIVITY
2 BAD LIEUTENANT
3 SPY NEXT DOOR

Male rape: New director opens a Pandora's box

From page E1

DEBUTING
Director Mark Sherdil Bautista

"He came home traumatized. He wanted the same person anymore. He lost all joy and hope in life. Until one day, he was found in the bathroom. He burned himself to death."

By the end of the interview, Bautista was in tears.

The story affected him deeply. "I couldn't eat and sleep," he recounted. "When I relayed the story to my mother, Glaiborne Illanes, she was retained speechless."

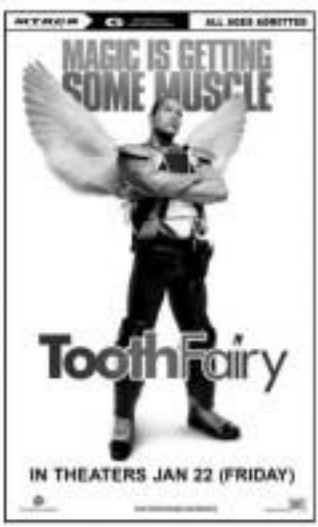
That conversation jump-started a "personal journey" he finished and his team.

The shoot itself, he said, was difficult and "really emotional." From day one, the material thwarted him. "It's a sensitive and controversial story."

Moreover, it's no issue that's seldom tackled in the media—apart from leering and lecherous references in prime-time and tabloids.

He wanted to depart from all that. "I want-

MAIN E6



GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A LIFAH BY JOE ABREA

PUGAD BABOY BY PH. JUNIOR

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LOVEHOOTS BY ELIZABETH CHOPKO

JAMES BOND

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BEH BY DANIEL MILTON

ATOMO AND VISSOY BY ORA-GASCILLANO

KUBO MACHINE BY FRANK ABREA

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCES DRAKE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dan Gries

			3	9		5		
		3		1			9	
5			6		2			
		2		6		9		3
1	6		8		9		4	7
8		4		3		1		
			5		6			1
	4			7			6	
		6		8	4			

Difficulty: Expert

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	8	7	1	4	2	9	6	3
3	6	4	9	5	7	8	1	2
9	2	1	6	3	8	4	5	7
8	7	9	3	1	4	5	2	6
4	1	5	2	9	6	3	7	8
6	3	2	8	7	5	1	9	4
2	5	3	7	8	9	6	4	1
7	4	8	5	6	1	2	3	9
1	9	6	4	2	3	7	8	5

Not always right but always real

DOLLY WOOD
Dolly Anne Carvajal

BY THE TIME THIS COLUMN comes out, the media frenzy about Kris Aquino and James Yap's latest marital squabble must already be full-blown. The political rivals of Kris' brother, Noynoy, will milk the issue for all it's worth while Kris' camp will elaborate every minute of marriage counselling.

Kris knows the danger of getting too close to a married man because she fell for two: Phillip Salvador and Joey Marquez, many controversies ago. That's probably why she confronted former flirt-friend, Mayora Puentes, in a public flirt-fest every night in the rebar she did.

Mayora's version of the story is that Kris hurled insecurities at her and bad-mouthed her mother. On the other hand, Kris insists that she wasn't even inside at all.

It's easy to pass judgment on Kris because we all have pre-conceived notions of her based on hear-she families herself and her guests on TV, but that would be unfair. As one naughty guy puts it, "Pakitaki: e Kris Aking cuticle on TV dahil sa mga sa-intoning bubuy? Ano siya sa mga kumakain ng pwet-pwet? Ano siya sa mga nagsasabi ng 'Sarap!' sa mga tae? Ang sama ng comparison! Eh kung magsalita siya sa national TV nemagbu-BJ ba siya dahil bap-Joey Marquez?"

By time as it may, let's give Kris a break. She still hasn't fully recovered from the death of her cousin Gerry as she's still too emotionally drained to deal with marital woes. Once upon a time, I was close to Kris because she was an "instit-amakan" of my mom and she's the wrong of my son JC.

That's why when Kris' sister was bridled in scandal, I can't help but look back and remember how simple she was and how uncomplicated her life was when she made her first TV appearance as a guest in my mom's show "Sun Star" a few hours after her own mom became President.

Even back then, Kris was already quirky and feisty. For some quick still see her through this roundabout episode of her colorful life. She may not always be right, but she's always real. The only in her may have lost some smile by marrying Mayora, but he hasn't lost hope that she will be well in the domestic front. Just as her late great mom would want it to be.

***

Albert Martinez went side to go to the wake of Tita Mila Domingo, the mom of his ex, Dawdy Sarmo. I have fond memories of our honorable dame when Albert and Snooky were still a couple and I was the GF of his brother William back during my high school days.

"I was busy raising my two children," Albert said. "That's why I just relaxed my condolences through a friend."

Fast-forward to his mother-in-law, Amalia Fuentes, who has undoubted a beautiful about him. What are his excuses regarding Tita Mila's exit with his wife Lizzy? "They will always be mother and daughter as they will al-

JAMES Yap and Kris Aquino

ways love each other," he explained. "It's just as unfortunate that all this trouble is happening at this time when Lizzy is still recovering from the Big C."

Are they pushing through with their silver wedding anniversary celebration in Boston? "The trip is on standby because I don't be gone for more than three days due to my schedule," he replied. "We might just spend the actual day in a nearby place."

Wherever Albert and Lizzy are, love surrounds them because from day one, they have always given it their all, against all odds.

***

It was such a delight to be a surprise guest in TV 5's "Juicy" during the birthday episode of my son JC. Belated happy birthday luv. Thanks for making me one proud Mama and for making me realize that, indeed, the best years are yet to come.

It was also the birthday of JC's bff sparring partner on the show, Mico Guevarra. They were born a day apart. He reminds JC and Alex have perfect chemistry as Alex pats it, "Talagang dinilawan ilaw magang magka-bestie. Alex ill have team ah! Onghie!"

Alex's sister Trixie surprised her via a phone patch interview and squealed on her "Hapee BC yung si Alex. Kahit matalking some singer-wannabe. At pag two days straight ayaw na babay feeling ayw sha'll get sick. She's not a homebody. Hospitalik yan pero I always reminded her to save for the rainy days. So now life, I give her advice para ganu gawa naman siya ang gusto nya [laughs]."

Birthdays are a good time for celebs like this and JC is bond with family to keep them grounded and remind them to look beyond the show biz skies, so they won't get stuck somewhere between reality and fantasy.

***

Kudos to Bong Revilla and the executive team of "Ang Panday" for being the official top grosser in the 2009 Metro Manila Film Fest. It scored way for them to spend close to P90 million for just one movie. It was Bong who insisted that they spend that much if they wanted to make a landmark film.

"Besides, I had a number of reasons why I wanted it to be the best among the Panday films created by the Komikero King Carlo J. Caparas, which Nitong Jimmy Fee did three sequels of. It must be a fitting tribute to a King like him."

Aside from beating down all at the box office, "Panday" also bagged seven major awards including Best Picture and Best Actor.

Congratulations!

***

"Brothers & Sisters" feature d is the latest foreign program to be part of Studio 23's Catch Up TV (streaming.tv23.ph), where you can watch the latest episodes of your favorite US programs as well as the Individuals network's local programs via the Internet for free.

The ensuing line-up includes "Grey's Anatomy," "Desperate Housewives," "Private Practice," "Legend Sydney," local shows like "I-Spook," "Ti Gibi," "News Central," two-minute shows dubbed as shorts like "Tilibita," "Thirsties" and "News Bites."

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Male ...

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DAVID, Roque and Santos at the forum

Challenge to young voters: Make a difference

By Dave Norico-A. Padilla

HUNDREDS OF COLLEGE students, mostly first-time voters, were challenged to make a difference in the coming elections.

In an election forum organized by the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) at the Adamson University theater, the young people were told they had the power to affect the outcome of the coming elections.

The forum, "Uniting for Clean, Honest, Accurate, Meaningful and Peaceful (CHAMP) Elections," is CEAP's way "to heighten awareness of issues and concerns" in the 2010 elections.

The forum also aimed to encourage the educational sector to help ensure credible elections.

Before the program, the students watched an audiovisual presentation on the basics of automated elections.

A survey sang by the Sudsoft Singers giving instructions on the new voting process was played. The song goes: May bilog sa kaliit-liit ang lalagyan sa bilog ay sinagang ang laki. Ikitam, i-shade, huh ng bilog (There is an egg-shaped circle. What you need to do is simple. Shadow/shade the circle).

Big percentage

Professor Bobby Ramos, director for policy studies of the Center for People Empowerment in Governance (CenPEG), opened the forum by pointing out that the youth accounted for a significant percentage of the nearly 50 million voters registered with the Commission on Elections.

Ramos said aside from the 2010 elections being fully automated for the first time, so much was at stake because a new government would have to be elected.

He dashed any false hopes about the new process saying "the automated system did not prevent vote-buying for 2008) in the ARMM (Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao)."

He said private sectors, particularly in "hotspots," could make clean elections difficult to achieve.

Professor Randy David of the Department of Sociology of the University of the Philippines said discussing private armies would have an impact "nothing short of revolutionary."

Corrupt system

David, who quipped he prepared a PowerPoint presentation on the audience would not think UP was low-tech, stressed that the biggest problem Filipinos faced was the (corrupt) system.

"We shouldn't be talking about political (un)ability because of our 100 years of experience conducting elections," David said in Filipino.

While "suffrage is a vital part of democracy," David said elections could be a double-edged sword—they could lead to change and power or spark chaos.

David overhauled his presentation by listing five points to guide voters:

1. Remove Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and her allies from power for a really genuine change.

2. Vote for a presidential candidate with courage by and has no record of graft and corruption, and who is willing to punish the corrupt administration.

3. Vote for candidates in the Senate and House of Representatives that are not allied with the incumbent President.

4. Start an organization that will train volunteers to guard the votes in the upcoming elections and to prevent any glitch to steal the votes.

Lawyer Harry Roque of the UP College of Law talked about possible scenarios involving automated elections. Roque foresaw automated cheating, if not a failure of election.

"The best scenario I see in the 2010 election is automated cheating .... at least a winner will be proclaimed," Roque said.

He detailed the effects of a failed election. He said those in power might use the situation to prolong their stay. The rare highly plausible, he said, with the delay in the delivery of voting machines.

"Other than an automated election, Hindi kaya pabor sa automated failure of election (Me see for automated election but we are not in favor)."

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FEU's *leading lady*

alma matter

FEU is a private, nonsectarian university that—under it from a merger of the Institute of Accounts, Business and Finance (AIBF) and the Far Eastern College in 1928.

Undergraduate enrollment: 20,000

Colors: Green and gold

Mascot: Mighty Tamaraw

Elite: Maroon Players (Drama); Pep Squadron, Manila

Website: www.feu.edu.ph

WHEN LYDIA B. ECHAUZ, 10th president of the Far Eastern University, was named one of The Outstanding Filipinos (TOnF) last December, she was only the sixth to get the distinction for the field of education in the award's 22-year history.

Married to Jesenio Echauz, with whom she has three children who have given them six grandchildren, and one of eight children of Ano S. Bialobrel and Isabelita T. Reyes, she had a big tub-ad section in the TOnF awards.

As university president, Echauz has made the distinct contribution of ensuring neighborhood for her students by linking up with global businesses and industries. At the same time, she took steps to ensure that the FEU is to its glory as a premier private conservation educational institution and a center for arts and culture.

The feature and the post for the dynamic person, brother words—and she took has not dimmed the pride and charming Echauz one bit.

Echauz mother studied nor taught at FEU. She earned her bachelor's degree in Economics and Mathematics from St. Theresa's College, her MBA from Ateneo de Manila University and her doctorate from De la Salle University. She somewhere in her past FEU played a rather significant role.

Find out here, from this Inquirer Q&A with her, and learn as well about how she connects with students and gets a feel for how FEU is impacting the lives of its students and their families.

Was becoming a teacher always your career path?

No, not at all. I didn't take up Education. I took up Commerce and Economics at St. Theresa's. Maybe it was because my parents were university professors. They were single, they were happy they had a big family. We were eight children. They met here in UST.

Were in FEU?

Yes, my mother was a high school teacher, and a graduate school student here. My father was a working student here. They were among readers sent by Nicanor Reyes [the founder] to Japan on a goodwill tour on a boat for 40 days. They must have fallen in love.

How did it happen that after graduation you started teaching at the University of the East?

My father was teaching there and he said it would be good for you teach. Just stay there for two years then after that ... Anyway, it was supposed to be a temporary stint. I ended up staying 12 years there. I had always thought that if I was going to teach, I was going to teach kids. But I ended up teaching 16-, 17-year-olds.

Did your students try to woo you since you were a young teacher?

No answer. Sometimes they would come with a rose. Laughs). They were cute. But my students were very well behaved. It was fun! When you can explain economics to a 16-year-old, it's gratifying.

At last summation: who found teaching fun?

You'll be surprised. A lot of teachers do. But, you know, teaching is a calling. That's what I tell the people here. If you're not happy in the university, it's not your calling. I always say never look for the money. Do what you love to do and the money will follow.

LYDIA B. ECHAUZ

Quiz

And if it's your calling, it doesn't feel like work. To this day, I've never felt it is work. My brother was saying, a Lydic nonstop magazine as 'All-nighter, magazine as La Salle magazine, appears as FEU nighttime-type info. It's because I explain what I'm doing. It's true for all students. Figure 95 percent of teachers.

A lot of them are dedicated, but some of them get bogged down by the problems ... especially in public schools.

(Education) Secretary Cielito Lapus and I were talking the other day about public school teachers. ... Now 95 percent of them had a problem with cavities. You know, when I see people on TV with no teeth, it breaks my heart because that's a sure sign of economic deterioration.

We've run photos of public school kids brushing their teeth with Secretary Lapus. But something like that, isn't that supposed to be a family responsibility?

Yes, it should be but, first of all, the parents are not educated. They themselves have no teeth. How can we expect them to be conscious of dental hygiene?

That's why we have campaigns here for the students to take care of their teeth. I'm always saying, if you're a graduate of FEU, you shouldn't have bad teeth. (Laughter) There's no excuse. We have everything here. There's always a dentist here. We even hire extra dentists to work on Saturdays.

Do you have plans to transfer your campus elsewhere?

No, but we're expanding though. In this compound we have FEU and we have FEU-East Asia College, which offers two-year programs for Engineering and IT (Information technology). Then we have another campus in Diliman (Quezon City). We call it FEU-FERN and it has grade school, high school and college. We have 15 hectares. About 30 percent of the grade school students are Koreans. Then we're opening in Silang, Cavite, in June, for Business, Education and HRM (hotel and restaurant management). The campus is beautiful. Then we're opening a small one in Makati in the old Daiichi building built by (architect) Leandro Locsin. We're offering only two programs there: ...Business and IT.

How do you decide where to expand?

Sometimes the opportunity just presents itself. Take for example Silang. We bought the property a few years back and now Cavite is developing very fast. In terms of courses, it depends on the demand. For example here when we opened HRM, we were ready to open four sections, but we ended up with 12 sections. The students want to learn to become chefs so they can have a future ships. They can leave the country ... it's still financial, it's still a matter of opportunities.

Do you offer culinary arts in FEU?

In Makati we will have a culinary arts program in partnership with the Lenotre (at Dusit Thani). But it's not a degree program; it's a short-term program.

Besides business, what else are your fields?

We have a strong English language program. I always tell our students I don't want to hear that FEU graduates cannot speak good English. (Laughter)

So aside from having good teeth, they should also have good English. (Laughter)

Yes, they should have good teeth. But manners and good English. Our students have improved a lot. The English language program is something we are making strides in.

How about your cultural and arts program,?

We have a year-round calendar of performances in our auditorium. We are celebrating the auditorium's 60th year. It was built in 1949 by Pablo Antonio (National Artist for Architecture). The auditorium was brought back to its original condition. Martha Cohen danced here. The teacher of (Luciano) Pavarotti

(CON'T)

"TEACHING is a calling. And if it's your calling, it doesn't feel like work. To this day, I've never felt it is work."

Playgrounds for the MIND

Member Schools

TUA receives Autonomous Status award and Institutional Accreditation Status

TUA RECENTLY RECEIVED TFI certificates for Autonomous Status from the Commission of Higher Education in a ceremony held in Malacañang Palace last December. President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo handed the award to TUA president Dr. Aurelina Puerto-Ramayo, vice president for academic affairs Dr. Epifanio S. Ruñejo and vice president for administration and finance Lourdes Nieves Fajardo. In pursuit to CHED Memorandum No. 44 series 2008, the award is given to higher institutions of learning which has shown consistently exemplary performances in the provisions in instruction, research and extension services.

TUA through the years has demonstrated commitment for excellence in learning and service. TUA also enjoys the top honorable Status from Oct. 6, 2009 to Oct. 5, 2012 as signified in the CHED Resolution No. 813-2009. With this status, TUA shall be privileged to be exempted from issuance of special order for its graduates, from issuance of permit for conducting and evaluation by CHED, priorities in the grant of subsidies and other financial incentives; institutional development assistance from CHED and to offer programs without securing permit/authority from CHED.

With the recognition, TUA becomes one of the few 44 private higher educational institutions in the Philippines out of 1,723 to receive the certification.

Moreover, TUA was also given the International Accreditation Status by the Federation of accrediting Agencies of the Philippines (FAAP) last December of the University Mandel Hall Auditorium.

TUA joined the elite group of three universities in the country as institutions of higher learning which met the high standard of curricular offerings and were granted Level 3 accreditation status, enjoying Level 3, five year accreditation in most of its curricular offerings: Arts and Sciences, Business Education, Teacher Education and nursing program. The Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities Accrediting Agency (Accra-AAI) recommended TUA for the recognition for which FAAP acted favorably on August 2009. TUA will have the institutional accreditation status from 2009 to 2014.

CHINESE UNIVERSITY AFFILIATES WITH TIP

A memorandum of understanding for academic exchange and cooperation was recently signed by the Technological Institute of the Philippines (TIP) represented by chairman Atty. TIP president Dr. Elizabeth E. Libiran, and Zhejiang Ocean University (ZOU) represented by counsel from Metro Manila, Mr. Zhang Yi Ming. Mou. The Zhejiang Ocean University is an institution of higher learning with emphasis on the development of marine and oceanic. It is under the jurisdiction of the Zhejiang Provincial Government of Zhejiang Province Republic of China. TIP has been engaging in various forms of international exchange programs with universities and research institutions specializing in Maritime programs for more than 20 countries including Japan, Korea, Russia, New Zealand and the Philippines. In the Philippines, TIP is one of the only two schools affiliated with ZOU. The other school is Cavite State University. The signing of the memorandum of understanding was witnessed by ZOU representatives Angping Liu, Foreign Language School teacher, Guangxi Yang, vice-dean of the International School; Kaihui Zhong, deputy director of the International Affairs Office; and Yanming Cheng, vice-dean of Marine Botany and Breeding School, and TIP officers Cynthia C. Llanes, OIC for academic affairs; Angelica S. Galicia, OIC for administration; student services; and alumni; Teresita Cruz, OIC for administration; student services; and alumni; Alice S. Raquel, VP for finance; Ismael C. Cortez, VP for quality management and planning; Angelo E. Lukay, assistant VP for administration; Elizabeth R. Pablo, dean of the College of Engineering and Architecture; Carl Joseph M. Lara Jr., Maritime Studies superintendent; and chairs of academic departments.

CHRISTMAS GIFT GIVING AT PERPETUAL

Captain Ramon M. Tamayo Jr. (center, LNHP), executive vice president of Delta Group of Companies hands the Gift Wishes gift package to Sara Fernandez (left) of Las Piñas City, a student of the Community Outreach Program of Perpetual Help System Dalta Las Piñas City recently held at the Phi Beta Delta Hall. Looking on are Perpetual Principals Fr. Ciriaco Mendoza (left) and Sr. Rosario Ma. Dela Cruz, RVM (right). Also shown in the photo are (from left) Rosario Ma. Dela Cruz, RVM, Principal of Perpetual Help System Dalta Las Piñas City; Atty. Robert Mendiondo, PHCC course counselor; Julie Ann Wu, Jollibee Dr. Bl.; auditor; Jan Ulrich Hechanova, PHCC course counselor; Jude Alan Wu, secretary; and Nilo Fabregas.

ESCOLARISMS CAPTURE FACES, PLACES, OCCASIONS

Cebu Doctor Escolar University alumni photographers showcased their best photographs in the recently concluded "Pass Like Faces, Places and Occasions" 1976 CDU Student Activity Center. The photos collected and exhibit featured captivating portraits, breathtaking landscapes, documented events and life-defining moments captured by Escolarians who are photography enthusiasts. Antonio Cortés from the College of Engineering and Architecture, Rizalino Rodriguez from the College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions and Raul Dela Cruz also of the Nursing College. The CDU Photographers Club organized Photo Ubi for CDU photography hobbyists to be able to exhibit their prized pictures and to showcase their photography skills. The activity was also a way to generate awareness and understanding about the different social issues depicted in the pictures. Photo shown: EVP Rosario de Leon and Photographers Club adviser Dr. Christopher Jay Cortado viewing the exhibit.

Pearl University fetes National Architecture Week

THE COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE (COA) OF PEARL UNIVERSITY HELD the annual Architecture Week on Dec. 9 – 11. The yearly event, which started in December 1997 when the then president Ferdinand Marcos declared that an architecture week be celebrated every December, had its theme titled "Arkitekturang Lokal: Yaman ng Bansa ng Bayan." Putting the spotlight on the main theme, the activities showcased various projects, competitions and theses which showcased the local culture. The opening highlight of the activities was the Bicycle Blanks, a convincing clash on architectural designs of the metropolis' landscape. Past and present architecture students of the college competed to the passing design, with a new phrase in the existing design being added with each succeeding pass.

PNU marks 18th year as university

THE PHILIPPINE NORMAL UNIVERSITY MARKED ITS 18TH YEAR AS A university with a week-long celebration last Jan. 11-15, from 15 years ago when President Corazon C. Aquino signed R.A. No. 7built Normal into the Philippine Normal College to full-fledge university of teacher education. A mass and opening program was held last by PNU president lawyer Lutgarda B. Barbo. Highlight of the celebration is the University Foryan where three past presidents of PNU, Dr. Gloria G. Salandanan, lawyer Lilia S. Bautista and Dr. Nilo S. Rivera discussed future prospects of PNU in the 'Ideal Philippine National Comprehensive Normal Universities (R.A. No. 9647)'. A Salute to Excellence Program honored two PNU faculty who made it to the top 10 in the Oct. 2, 2009 Licensure Examination for Teachers (Elementary Level). They are Julie Ann Faye Villacorte, 5th place, LET (Elementary Level), in Baguio and Jacob BEED class 2009 and Marjorie Dignaos Ruiz, 10th place, LET (Secondary Level).

5th North Batangas Summit tackles globalization

NORTH BATANGAS GOVERNMENT AND BUSINESS LEADERS, MEMbers of the academic and local interest groups gather once again for the 5th North Batangas Summit scheduled Jan. 29 at the Lima Park Hotel, Lima Technology Center, Malvar, Batangas. This event brings together experts in the fields of Regional Planning and Development, Economics, Investments, Trade and Entrepreneurship and Tourism Development. Also Planning a day of learning and discussions. This year's theme is "Connecting Batangas to the Global Village." The summit is being organized by the First Asia Institute of Technology and Humanities (FAITH), School of Management in partnership with Bath Builders Foundation Inc. (BBFI). Among this year's corporate sponsors are Lima Land Inc., Watermark, and Lima Park Hotel. For inquiries, contact direct Lubabe Obando or Windy Pangandaan at (043) 710-0000 loc 1251/1252 or fax 702 or e-mail mgdo@faith.edu.ph.

Assumption presents 'The Mystery of Irma Vep'

SEEKING IT'S 2010 SEASON IS A SUSPENSEFUL BLANKBOX THEATER COMPANY, THE Mystery of Irma Vep" written by Charles Ludlam and acted by professional actors Jon Santos and JV Katipunan. The comedy demonstrates excellence in character transformations where two actors play ten roles with the finest production crew consisting of award-winning theater students poised for quick changes and set transformations. This hilarious comedy shows on Jan. 21, 23 and 23, at the new Assumption Black Box Theater, 9/F Mona Eugenio Bldg, Assumption College, San Lorenzo Village, Makati City. This play is staged in tandem with another show produced by Jaclyn Jose and Maribel Ongoco starring Ana Veloso-Luz on "Rehearsal Techniques" for directors and teachers. There is also a Q&A forum with actors Jon Santos and JV Katipunan and a backstage tour. For details call Corinne Revilla at 817-0757 local 1163, 0917-76-84414 or e-mail mgdo@faith.edu.ph.

15 Korean teachers join 2010 International Exchange Program of Enverga University

FIFTEEN KOREAN TEACHERS FROM IEHO PROGRAM HIGH SCHOOL OF South Korea headed by the school principal Anthony Kim, arrived Jan. 5 for a five-day Teacher Exchange Program in the Manuel E. Enverga University Foundation (Meeuf) Education Department. Counterpart principal Reno V. Fernandez showed the Korean teachers how classes are conducted in the Philippines. The high school students studied a welcome program for the Korean guests in cooperation with the university's vice president for external affairs, Dr. Jesus Lapidario Jr. Woman. The program featured Philippine and Korean songs, and dances. Meeuf and Ieho group-shared Korean musical experiences in the Basic Education Department Auditorium involving pupils observing classes. The Korean participants exchanged entertainment programs, gained exposure to Philippine customs and traditions and visited tourist destinations. In October last year, a group of MEEUF high school teachers and students visited Korea to ten days as part of the International Students Exchange Program. On May 19-22 this year, counselor of MEEUF high school teachers and students in the exchange program to be headed by the Ieho Korean Barn High School. The Enverga teachers will observe classroom strategies, interesting pedagogies, relevant extracurricular activities and instructional materials used in school city.

Nurses, caregivers still in demand worldwide

WITH AN AGING POPULATION, THE DEMAND FOR HEALTH-CARE SERvices continues to grow and have opened good job opportunities for those who are interested to start their career as a healthcare professional. Realizing this continuing demand and cognizant of the requirements and needs of the different countries and healthcare companies here and abroad, St. Augustine School of Nursing, the leading educational institution in nursing and allied healthcare programs, has enhanced its course offerings and updated its facilities in all of its 23 branches nationwide. St. Augustine offers BS Nursing, Midwifery, Medical Technology, Physical Therapy courses, Nursing Aide, and 6-month Caregiving courses. It continues to forge partnerships and alliances with international and local companies to provide job placement assistance for its graduates. For more information, log on to www.saas.edu.ph or call 213-0801, local 8277.

University of Mindanao, Rotary Club of Pag-Asa Davao partner for book donations

"KNOWLEDGE IS POWER". IT IS IN THIS MANNER that the University of Mindanao (UM) and the Rotary Club of Pag-Asa Davao (RCPD) find a joint effort to donate books for high school students of Mira Bonita Memorial High School (MBMHS) and Gov. Vicente Duterte Pinamuan High School (VDPHS), both are adopted schools of University of Mindanao. The donation was introduced by a turnover-donation of approximately 3000 reading materials to the schools on Jan. 11 in the respective campuses.

The books are general references, both for students and students in their 'work hand-in-hand for a wider realm of knowledge.' The books were donated to UM by the Children International Philippines through the facilitation of USAID Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program and the RCPD Inaugural Club of UM Matina High School.

Furthermore, another series of book donations were discovered to the beneficiaries. On Dec. 15, 2009, Ibo Grace Bautista Elementary School and the Lumads of Marilog District received the books through the "Bayong Buang Dinalaw" TV program of ABS-CBN, while on Dec. 16, 2009 a book donation and a MOA signing with Communal Elementary School represented by its principal Olivia V. Dela Rama and RCPD IPP Maria Alberta D. Yuvienco was conducted. These are just initial donations that GEM and RCPD in collaboration with partner companies and organizations are initiating and facilitating. May thanks and of generosity be communicated to all other advocates of building the bright future for the youth through books donations.

EUREKA! *Queenie N. Lee-Chua*

Peace through women's education

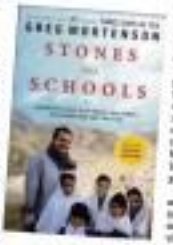
FOR NEARLY TWO DECADES, businessman Greg Mortenson has been working to promote peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan, using the most potent tool of all—education.

In the 1980s, Mortenson lost his way in the K2 mountains, and was rescued by Pakistani villagers who cared for him. He made them a promise—that he would build a school and establish a school for the community.

Despite financial, human, cultic, logistic obstacles, Mortenson was able to keep his promise. He built not just one school in the Central Asian hot, to date, more than 300 schools serving more than 24,000 students.

Through the efforts of the nonprofit Central Asia Institute (CAI), run by a team staff in Pakistan and the United States, Mortenson now also establishes the schools, most of them for girls, in the remotest regions of Pakistan.

The remarkable story was told in his best-selling 2006 book, *Three Cups of Tea* (which I reviewed on Sept. 1, 2007). The book has become required reading for all officers studying counterinsurgency at the US Pentagon.



Afghanistan

By the 1990s, Mortenson had become known to and trusted by the people he worked to serve. In 1996, a group of Wrights Investment Scots the latter three mothers of Afghanistan invented he slept without rest to ask him personally to build a school for their village.

Again he made a promise, not knowing it would take practically a decade before he could do so. The story of this Afghanistan foray is told mostly, humorously and endearingly in Mortenson's new book, "Stones into Schools: Promoting Peace with Books, not Bombs, in Afghanistan and Pakistan."

In that time, the CAI was working only in Pakistan, and already had to handle full in that volatile area. Here could they succeed in Afghanistan, Mortenson wondered, when the Soviet armies then and the US military now could not? Answer to the world could a small, non-government organization, without funding from the US government, build a school next to the old Khyber burial grounds in the heart of the Afghan Pamir's Bandhgo of the World?

But Mortenson was determined to fulfill his promise, and he succeeded in building a string of schools, starting from nearby areas in Afghanistan and aiming to reach the farthest places.

Mortenson could not have accomplished much, however, in the process, set up built a dozen dedicated men with remarkable stories of their own.

"I drove over a Muslim version of 'fatuscraps'," says Mortenson, "it would probably be modeled on my staff."

But this unlikely team has performed miracles, and continues to do a job that would take many organizations to match. And everyone is passionate about women's education. "Schools are everything," Mortenson says. "They would lay down their lives to educate girls."

The team had problems, big and small. Some were man-made, such as religious opposition. In the remote Korphe village in Baltistan, it took eight years to convince the local coal. Ishtiq to let girls attend school. Today more than 500 girls are in school, with the support of that very same mullah.

"The change of heart affects the nature that good relations, ships often demand drastic patience," Mortenson says.

Other problems were beyond human control, such as the 2005 devastating earthquake that hit the Azad Kashmir region of Pakistan and caused so much suffering. The CAI set up temporary tent schools and, eventually, many earthquake-proof schools (with Japanese technology).

Educating girls

World Bank studies indicate that a single year of primary schooling results in a 10-20 percent rise in income for women. The economist Daniel Schultz says education year of high school can raise wages by 15-25 percent.

Nobel-prize winning economist Amartya Sen, among others, urges countries to educate women, because this has a multiplier has a ripple effect.

"I see other factor even more close to matching the cascade of positive changes triggered by enabling a single girl how to read and write," Mortenson says. Aside from health and economic benefits, education can lead to political changes as well.

"In Muslim societies, a person who has been manipulated into believing in extremist violence or terrorism often seeks the permission of his mother before any pain conditions jihad [holy war]—and educated women, as a rule, tend to withhold their blessing for such things," Mortenson says. "Educating girls is the surest way to undermine violent extremism in a country."

Nat'l Autism Week kicks off

THE 14TH NATIONAL Autism Week is being observed simultaneously in all 100 main universities and 2 Jan. 24 under the auspices of SM Cares Committee on Disability Affairs, and the Autism Society Philippines (ASP), (for activities on P3.)

The theme this year is "Giant Leaps: Transcending Boundaries."

Rina Montes, chair of SM Committee on Disability Affairs, in his year's honorary chair for the National Autism Week working committee.

A Body Mass and Family Fun-Day yesterday kicked off the week that will culminate among communities to enable children and adults with autism to live with dignity and enable them to become independently and contribute productively to society.

SM's ANNIE S. Garcia, and Shin C. Muloc with ASP president Dang Kun (center)

Through its Committee on Disability Affairs, SM has been very supportive of ASP's causes. It has offered SM malls as venue for all their activities.

SM hosted last year the first ever sensory film showing of the Disney animated movie "Up," which was attended by some 300 kids with autism and their families. Because of its success, the sensory film program will be added on an Lunduia or Old Cinemas in close coordination with SM.

DR. VICKI Belo and Bunch Fuentes (above) with scholars Mary Jan Calubia, Jovito Miller, Mark Jerild de Jesus, Christine Joyce Lagatan, Patricia Monica and Ellis Marie Laurence. With her is patient Alvin Carballido. Ivan Barcelona (with Dad) Jaclyn Purno and Henry Paquiz (left)

Beauty in scholarships

SEX PULL SCHOLARS OF THE Belo and Sexia Belo Foundation Inc. Elle school year were feted recently at a holiday dinner party hosted by "Doctor to the Stars" Vicki Belo.

Honored were leading student Mary Ann Calubia and younger Belo scholars Mark Jerild de Jesus, Charisse Joyce Lagatan, Patrick Monica, Ellis Marie Laurence and Jovito Miller, whose feats spotted on the scientific show "Wowowowee." The Belo and Sexia Belo Foundation is named in honor of Belo's parents.

Quite appropriately, the young scholars played a game of "Guess Homer" after the dinner and performed special numbers for Belo and her guests, who included Abs-cbn and television host Boots Anonuevo and "National Bet" host Cheryl Cosim.

Belo Medical Group's free brow treatment beneficiaries completed the party. They included Henry Paquiz, Jolaico Purio, Ivan Barcelona and Alvin Carballido.

Gift of an afternoon of fun and learning

THE GIFT OF CHANGE, THE annual year-end project of Robinsons Malls for the Jaycees Foundation, capped its 2010 campaign with fun activities for kids at Robinsons Place Manila.

Some 120 students from the Jaime Cardinal Sin Learning Center were treated to an afternoon of fun and learning.

Faber-Castell organized an classes handled by Lola Ledgets on watercolor painting and batik art.

For a special trip to Tom's World in Robinsons Place Manila, the students received free tokens to enjoy the different games.

Rodrigo Fabres and Arman Madia of The Children's Library conducted an animated storytelling of "Madyik Stiyk in Time," the tale of a magician that then uses transform itself into an airplane, a train, or even

Finally, Jill delos Cruz presented a magic show, getting them to participate as celebrities.

Generous Fabres Corp., Summit Media Publishing, Smore and Mini Time supported the event.

For the 2010 campaign, with the theme "The Gift of Change, Help," Robinsons Malls and Jaycees Foundation raised a modest amount to assist the students of the Jaime Cardinal Sin Village.

Belo Balon Foundation, Pfizer Philippines Inc., Johnson & Johnson, Aunthyson Co-It Best Center, Mikell Laboratories Inc., and employees of Robinsons Malls also contributed their cash.

Jaime Cardinal Sin Village, a beneficiary of The Jaycees Foundation Inc., is in Punta, Sta. Ana, Manila, and is home to some 600 indigent families. The community has a learning center, a basketball court, a recycling center, community sari-sari store, and sewer tenements.

In school year 2009-2010, the Jaime Cardinal Sin Learning Center got its first high school graduates.

Out of the darkness into the light

A visually impaired teacher uses unique strategies to teach English to sighted students

Text and photos by Andrea S. Pineda
Contributor

"ARE YOU ALL PROPERLY SEATED?" THE teacher asks her sixth grade class of 51 students.

With a cane, she slowly makes her way to the front of the classroom. Two students help her tape a piece of manila paper on the blackboard.

The above may seem like a daily routine in a public school except that Maria Cristina Medina, "Teacher Tina" to her students, is severely blind.

She is on her first year teaching a regular class, after having been a special education teacher for multi-handicapped children for more than five years.

Due to a shortage of teachers at the Laguna Boardinvestal Community School in San Pedro, Medina has been tasked to handle regular classes, aside from her special education (SpEd) classes. She now teaches English to 132 sighted students.

First

According to the Resources for the Blind, Medina is the first visually impaired teacher to handle a regular class.

"Matching socks or ironing (it) was difficult at first," says Medina. Some teachers took advantage of her lack of sight, going in and out of the room without her permission when the class was in session.

"Magagaler ka na lang, yung the makapag-isang na (you will be surprised that some had already gone on record)," she says.

But what the students did not know was that there were degrees to her blindness. Medina can still see blurred silhouettes of persons and objects, and the colors black and white.

Medina lost the sharpness of her central and peripheral vision in 2005 because of hereditary macular dystrophy disease.

"I cried for a month," Medina says. When she recognized she was losing what little she had, she decided to go into SpEd.

Some parents have doubted her ability to teach, correct test papers, and discipline students, but Medina has compensated for her visual impairment by using unique classroom strategies in fulfilling her responsibilities.

Initially, it was strained since she tried to teach the students' seats with their names written in Braille. She also set them name tags in Braille. Though the system helped, what worked for her in the end was recognizing the voices of students as they answer home—all 132 of them.

By listening to students, Medina says, she knows who is present in the classroom and who is not. Though she cannot identify the students who raise their hands during class, Medina relies on her memory of who is seated where.

As for test papers, she relies on the help of her 12 year-old daughter and her student assistants.

She made the production of her visual aids a project for some students. And when a student pointed out she had the visual aid upside down, Medina quipped,

"Kung ako nga na lang (how I love cheating. If you're paying attention)."

How about cheating? Medina says parents often ask this question.

"I am relying on honesty. If you cheat, then it is all up to you. Nang ito, nalagang nagsasabotage (Some students really tell on those who cheat)."

Smooth transition

The support of her supervisors and students has helped make her transition from SpEd to regular teaching smooth. To manage her classes, she has appointed class leaders to monitor the work of the other students.

One of her students, Michael, says admirably: "She sees do things of how this her can't. She sees gets to different places."

At 43, Medina is a single parent to her daughter and the sole breadwinner of the family that adopted her as an infant (she never knew her birth mother).

She says it is her faith in God that has allowed her to overcome all odds.

A former Sipaog Pilipino dancer who now teaches the folk dance "Maglalatik" to her visually impaired students, Medina did not plan to be a teacher. But now she thinks it is her destiny.

"I am called to do this," she says.

In 2006, Medina attended an international conference in Malaysia to speak about inclusive education. She strongly believes that differently-abled children should be able to go to a regular school and should not be isolated.

For others with a disability like hers, her advice is to pursue their dreams, whatever it may be.

MEDINA identifies her students by their voices.

A range of options for special learners

By Erika Sauler

THE AUDIENCE laughed from time to time as Elena Martinez, 25, recounted the obstacles she has faced as a person with cerebral palsy, a disorder that affects movement and posture.

She physician/handicap was no laughing matter, but Martinez told her story with such positivity and humor that small gems were drawn to focus as the opening of the recent Special Education Expo at Glorietta mall in Makati City.

Rhea Rivera organized the expo to provide all the right of every child with special needs to a suitable educational program. The event brought together parents and teachers of special children, as well as service providers like therapy centers, book publishers and toys and equipment manufacturers.

With the theme "A World of Options," the expo aimed to create awareness of the needs of special children and the options available to them.

Martinez spoke on "In the eyes of an Exceptional Child" in the special education forum held as part of the event.

Martinez, who champions the rights of persons with disabilities, is the Region I representative to the Incoming Board of Governors of Kanya Kalipunan ng Mga Kapansanan sa Pilipinas Inc. or Disabled People International—the national federation of 250 grassroots organization of persons with disabilities.

Unheard

The Zamboanga native, who has a degree in psychology from Trinity College in Quezon City, recalled that one professor had mentioned how she got to college. Unheard, Martinez replied she took the entrance test orally.

She added she could take the midterm examination for his class the next day if he would let her do it and she got a perfect score.

"Napakamagastos ng mga ordinary (People have negative views for any condition). In the system, not the only way to measure that thing (?)," Martinez asked.

She said she had learned to look at things positively. It doesn't bother her when people stare at her when she and her husband are at a mall.

"I'm like a celebrity. Whenever I go, many people look at me," she quipped.

Martinez said more than four million Filipinos with disability lived below the poverty line. There ground lack of access to education, services and employment that lead to their exclusion and poverty.

"Negative attitudes, lack of access to the same opportunities and inclusive respect, are most disabling than the actual impairment," she added.

Other speakers tackled the state of SpEd in the Philippines, appropriate educational placement, teaching techniques, alternative therapies and coping with stress.

Education Assistant Secretary Teresita Ditching discussed Philippine laws and policies on SpEd.

Neurologist Dr. Ruth Regala-Cruz, who holds clinic at Capitol Medical Center, listed indications of developmental delays in language, social, cognitive, gross and fine motor that can serve as red flags to parents:

- Having less than three words at 18 months old
- No eye contact, does not orient to one's name, limited attention, personal play, imitation, and not pointing at 18 months old
- Does not know colors or letters at five years old
- Not walking independently at 18 months old

Education specialist professor Frances Olivia Bitanga-Maglaya said there were no perfect parents, no ideal school, and no ideal student and teachers. In education, the aim is to make a good match.

She said a placement program was dependent on the type and degree of a child's "exceptionality." A child with a mild degree of exceptionality must be placed in a less restrictive environment like regular classrooms while a severe case needs a more restrictive setting like special schools and institutions, said Bitanga-Maglaya, who is currently a lecturer at St. Joseph's College in Quezon City.

Genevieve Rhonda Gaw and Elizabeth Legaspi taught teaching and reading techniques. Rhonda Gaw is a psychotherapist/hypnotherapist and clinical psychologist and department of Miriam College. Legaspi is a clinic director of Wee Think School Inc.

They said the current view was disability was not inherent in the individual, rather, it was society that rendered people disabled. Teachers should adapt themselves and their methods to the needs of each child with special needs.

HAWKING is one acclaimed whose people stare and thinks of herself as a celebrity.